

Lotto fever

Roll up for the £33 million roll-over 10,000 tickets to be won

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Back to the grid

Jackie Stewart returns to Formula One

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Million homes cut off for two nights

Inquiry into why water supply failed

BY ANDREW PIERCE AND KATE ALDERSON

WATER companies were ordered yesterday to explain why up to a million households were left without supplies for a second night.

With the Army on standby in the worst-hit areas of the North East and Scotland, people queued for up to an hour to fill bottles and buckets from emergency tankers and bowlers. Hospitals cancelled operations and many schools may not be able to start the new term on time next week.

Water officials admitted that there was a crisis with reservoirs in danger of drying up as millions of gallons drained away through fractured pipes and mains. One Scottish director urged companies not to reopen after the holiday today and appealed to people "to go dirty".

Ofwat, the industry regulator, has written to all companies demanding an explanation of what has happened and telling them to look at how water authorities overseas manage their supplies. Customers are entitled to £10 for every day they are cut off, so the compensation bill could be huge. "They will not be able to pass on the cost of this to the customers. That is the bottom line," Ofwat said.

The companies have been widely criticised since privatisation for not doing enough to improve their infrastructure. But the present problems are, in part, due to a new pipe-laying programme. The severe frost and rapid thaw caused small mains pipes to twist and break as the ground first expanded and then suddenly

contracted. The plastic pipes that had recently replaced leaky cast iron ones proved more vulnerable because they had not bedded in, so the twisting effect of the "ground shift" was exaggerated.

But Canadian experts said that much of the damage could have been avoided had the pipes been laid 5 ft rather than 3 ft below the frost line. The companies, however, defended their record saying they had teams in place all over Christmas to try to minimise any problems for customers. Even so, they and Ofwat have been bombarded with complaints from people who were cut off without warning and about inadequate emergency supplies.

Tyneside and Wearside were worst affected, and 250,000 people had to take to the streets to collect their water. Ashington and Newbiggin in Northumberland were cut off for the second day running, forcing two hospitals to cancel operations and give patients bottled water to drink. Staff at a maternity hospital had to carry water to wards on upper floors because of a drop in pressure.

In Ashington, which has a population of about 27,000, the 550-gallon tanks offering emergency supplies were rapidly emptied and scuffles and arguments were reported over how much each person should take. Thomas Shill, 62, queued for an hour only to find the tank was empty. "I have no idea when the next tank will arrive and I'm furious," he said. "My water

has been off for more than 24 hours and no one can tell me when it will be back on."

Northumbrian Water said that people should not expect supplies to return for at least 24 hours and urged them not to hoard water from the emergency tanks. A spokesman said that as soon as containers were emptied they were returned to a reservoir and refilled.

That did not satisfy a group of Labour MPs, however, who wrote to the Environment Secretary to demand a public inquiry into the shortfall.

In the Strathclyde region of Scotland, more than half a million homes suffered burst pipes and a fleet of eight large tankers and 200 smaller ones were used to deliver supplies.

Territorial Army tankers moved into parts of Scotland yesterday, but the help was limited and the three regions worst affected — Strathclyde, Lothian and Grampian — said they had no plans to take up the Government's offer of full-scale military help.

Gus Ferguson, director of water in Lothian, appealed to big firms not to reopen today after Hogmanay as supplies to reservoirs from Loch Lomond were dangerously low. "They may start up, run for a day and find there is no water. Their reaction has not been very good — great displeasure might be the message."

Mr Ferguson also urged people to minimise demand at home. "Our message is 'Go dirty for a couple of days'."

Quick thaw blamed, page 3



The Prince of Wales with Prince William, right, and Prince Harry on the slopes above the resort of Klosters before yesterday's accident

Bodyguard hurt in 'curse of Klosters' fall

BY MICHAEL HORNSWELL

THE Prince of Wales's principal bodyguard fell and broke his leg on an alpine ski run at Klosters in Switzerland yesterday while protecting the royal party during their skiing holiday.

Inspector Tony Parker, a member of Scotland Yard's Royal and Diplomatic Squad, was found in considerable pain by a guide and the Prince, who stayed with him until a helicopter arrived to fly him to hospital.

Inspector Parker, who has protected the heir to the throne for more than 12 years, later had an emergency operation at Davos Hospital, eight miles

away, to insert a hip screw. The Prince, who has been plagued by "the curse of Klosters" since his friend, Major Hugh Lindsay, a former equestrian to the Queen, was killed in an avalanche at the resort in 1988, telephoned the injured officer's wife, Angela, in London to explain what had happened. He was said to be "deeply upset".

Inspector Parker, described as an accomplished skier, was the Prince's main skiing bodyguard. He was made a member of the Royal Victorian Order in the Queen's Birthday Honours List in June 1993.

Although other officers are accompanying the party, which includes Prince William



Parker: leg broken

and Prince Harry, a replacement personal protection officer was expected to be flown to Switzerland.

At no time, it was

emphasised last night, was the security of the Prince or his sons jeopardised by the accident, which happened on the first full day of the holiday. Prince William, 13, and Prince Harry, 11, witnessed the drama. The party intends to go ahead with a full programme of skiing.

Inspector Parker was skiing ahead of the royal party when the accident happened at 1.10pm. He was on the bottom quarter of the Schwinaboden run on the Madrisa mountain, where ice was turning to slush, leaving rocks exposed.

No-one witnessed the fall but it is thought Inspector Parker may have hit a rock. His right femur was broken

near the hip. He was skiing ahead to ensure that the run was clear and safe.

Bruno Sprecher, a ski guide, followed closely by the Prince, discovered Inspector Parker, who was conscious, and the Swiss police called a helicopter. The inspector, who is in his forties, is expected to be in hospital for at least ten days.

A royal spokesman said: "Skiing is potentially a dangerous pursuit. The Prince accepts that accidents will happen but this will not stop him or his children skiing."

Later, Prince William witnessed a second accident when a skier, thought to be a boy, fell and appeared to have an epileptic fit.

British Gas compensates cold clients

BY CHRISTINE BUCKLEY

BRITISH GAS is to compensate thousands of customers left without heating after it failed to repair systems covered by its service agreements. The company has started to recruit contract workers to cope with the backlog of central heating repairs.

The cold weather brought a spate of complaints from the three million customers with the Three Star service contracts, which cost as much as £104 a year, when their systems broke down and no engineering help was sent within the 24 hours promised by the contracts.

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US Embassy stops paying staff

BY MARTIN FLETCHER AND EMMA WILKINS

THE waves from America's budget crisis have crossed the Atlantic. More than 300 British employees at the American Embassy in London are working gratis for Uncle Sam because the Grosvenor Square mission has run out of money to pay them.

William Crowe, the ambassador, no longer has any funds for official entertaining. Diplomats can no longer buy their British contacts lunch at Washington's expense. Lowly officials, British or American, who need to take taxis across London must pay the fares themselves because the embassy has no petty cash.

This state of affairs is the result of the partial government shutdown 3,000 miles away in Washington that has lasted a record 19 days as President Clinton and Congress haggle over Republican plans to cut federal spending. About 280,000 non-essential workers have been laid off

temporarily, but British law does not recognise such "furloughs". That means that every British employee at the Embassy and at the American consulates in Edinburgh and Belfast is having to work as normal.

Tomorrow they and their American counterparts will be paid for the week before the December 15 shutdown, but not the week after, and unless the crisis is resolved by January 18 they will not receive their next fortnightly cheque. They have no guarantee they will be reimbursed eventually, but every politician in Washington assures them that they will be.

There are 380 Britons among the London Embassy's 650 staff and one official acknowledged last night that the British employees were distressed and disappointed. "They are a sophisticated bunch and understand the dynamics of this, but that does

not help pay next week's mortgage."

It is also the second time in a year that they have faced financial hardship. Last summer the Inland Revenue found that the Embassy had been under-reporting employees' salaries for the past 30 years and demanded £3 million in back taxes. Admiral Crowe saved the day by persuading



Crowe: coffers bare

the State Department to foot the bill.

London staff said yesterday that uncertainty over their pay had led to stress among workers and low morale.

Dean Peterson, a senior commercial officer, took up his post in London two months ago but is still meeting repayments on a mortgage on his house in Atlanta. "It is a very difficult and strenuous situation for everyone. Creditors do not take account of the fact that you have not had a pay cheque," he said.

Although he has worked for the Government off and on since 1961, Mr Peterson has never experienced problems with salaries before. "Some of my colleagues tell me that this is the fourth time this has happened, but it has never gone on for such a long time."

The London Embassy is not unique in its penury: every American diplomatic mission

Mayhew links IRA to deaths

The Northern Ireland peace process faced its gravest crisis after Sir Patrick Mayhew, the Northern Ireland Secretary, linked the IRA to the murders of seven alleged drugs dealers in the Province since April. The latest victim, Ian Lyons, 31, a Roman Catholic, died yesterday after being shot in Lurgan.

Moderate nationalists said the IRA was trying to break the ceasefire and the Ulster Unionists urged the Government to suspend talks with Sinn Féin. Pages 2, 16, 17

England struggle in final Test

England were dismissed for 153 on the first day of the final and deciding Test against South Africa in Cape Town yesterday. Only Robin Smith, with 66, offered serious resistance. The South Africans lost two early wickets and were 44 for 2 at the close. Page 44

Muted cheers greet drop in drink-drive figures

BY KEVIN EASON
MOTORING EDITOR

DRINK-DRIVING offences have fallen for the fourth successive Christmas. Police recorded 4,330 positive breath tests in England and Wales, compared with 4,706 over the same period last year, a fall of 8 per cent.

However, one in five of the drivers arrested over the holiday period had failed the breathalyser test after being involved in an accident. The pictures of

a young man crippled by drink-driving, shown over Christmas as part of the Government's £12 million campaign, underlined the theme which has helped to reduce drastically the number of drink-drive related deaths over the past decade.

David Williams, Chief Constable of Surrey and chairman of the Association of Chief Police Officers' Traffic Committee, said yesterday: "While the overall reduction should be welcomed, it must be treated with a degree of

caution, given that 22 per cent of those who gave positive tests had been involved in an accident."

"In all there were 939 alcohol-related accidents. This cannot be acceptable. We must remember that behind these statistics lie untold distress, grief and suffering."

"Over the campaign period, we know that at least three people have lost their lives in drink-related road accidents and seven others suffered horrific injuries. As is often the case,

many were innocent victims of the recklessness of others."

The AA also said that some areas had recorded big increases, with many seeming to be immune to warnings. Andrew Howard, the AA's head of road safety, said: "Britain's drink-drive problem is caused by a small minority of motorists who continue to flout the law. It is those persistent offenders who need to be targeted."

Regional breakdown, page 5

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Government urged to suspend Sinn Fein talks after seventh shooting

Peace in jeopardy as Mayhew links IRA to killings

By NICHOLAS WATT, IRELAND CORRESPONDENT, AND JOHN HICKS

THE Northern Ireland peace process faced its gravest crisis last night after Sir Patrick Mayhew linked the IRA to the murder of seven alleged drugs dealers since April.

As moderate nationalists gave warning that IRA hardliners were trying to break the ceasefire, the Ulster Unionists called on the Government to suspend its talks with Sinn Fein.

John Taylor, deputy leader of the Ulster Unionist Party, said that Sir Patrick, the Northern Ireland Secretary, must take action because loyalists could be the next targets of the IRA gunmen.

The latest alleged drugs dealer believed to have been shot by the IRA died in the early hours of yesterday. Ian Lyons, 31, a Roman Catholic, was shot in the chest by two men as he sat in a car with his girlfriend outside her parents' home in Lurgan, Co Armagh. The attackers, who used pump-action shotguns at close-range, fled on foot.

Relatives of Mr Lyons, who had a son, Nathan, 2, last night denied he had any links with drugs. Pauline Forker, his sister, said: "What gives these cowards the right to murder in cold blood an innocent man who was young and energetic and highly thought of on both sides of the community, just to cover up their own illicit dealings?"

Direct Action Against Drugs said yesterday it had carried out the shooting. Sir Patrick said, however, that the RUC was "pretty convinced" the murder was the work of the IRA. In a BBC Television interview, he said the murder was "not compatible with a

commitment to peaceful methods, to democratic methods. It casts great doubt, therefore, on whether Sinn Fein, who are inextricably linked with the IRA, are themselves committed to peaceful methods."

"Only parties who are committed to peaceful and democratic methods can, of course, expect to sit down and negotiate about the future of Northern Ireland."

Sir Patrick conceded that the killings could jeopardise the Government's plans to hold all-party talks in Northern Ireland. He challenged Sinn Fein to condemn the murders and to condemn the party's claim that it had no influence over the IRA.

The Ulster Unionists endorsed Sir Patrick's comments, and said he should no longer talk to Sinn Fein while the IRA was using violence. Mr Taylor, MP for Strangford, said: "The Government should not be talking with those who are breaking the

law. The talks should be stopped."

Mr Taylor said that the killings were technically not a breach of the IRA ceasefire because the terrorists had said only that they would suspend attacks on members of the security forces. The MP feared, however, that the IRA was planning to expand its attacks by shooting loyalists, which would be a breach of the ceasefire.

"We are now on the slippery slope to the assassination of loyalists. That will be the next step in the build-up," Mr Taylor said.

Some of the strongest condemnation of the IRA yesterday came from moderate nationalists such as Cardinal Cahal Daly, Primate of All Ireland, and Seamus Mallon, deputy leader of the Social Democratic and Labour Party.

Cardinal Daly described the killings as repulsive and said they were jeopardising the peace process. "Is [Gerry Adams] being undermined from within his own organisation? Time will tell, but time is running out for the peace process."

Mr Mallon, MP for Newry and South Armagh, said he believed the peace process would hold, but added: "There are those within the IRA and other paramilitary organisations who are trying to break that peace, and the way they're doing it is this awful use of violence—public execution in the [latest] instance and in [the] others in Belfast."

Mr Mallon called on the Sinn Fein leadership to condemn and disown the murders. "There can be no hiding



Ian Lyons, shot by the anti-drugs group thought to be an IRA cover, with his son

place for the public representatives regarding these types of assaults. They are going to have to realise that you cannot have this millstone of awful sordid violence hanging round your neck when in effect you are part of the process."

Sinn Fein said there was not "an iota of evidence" to link the killings to the IRA. Mitchell McLaughlin, chairman of Sinn Fein, said no political party could condone such actions. "These tragedies have to be brought to an end as quickly as possible."

Despite Mr McLaughlin's comments, security sources in Northern Ireland were in no doubt that the killings had been sanctioned by the IRA

leadership. One said that the IRA has increased its attacks on alleged drugs dealers because the terrorists feared they were losing their grip on nationalist areas in the light of the ceasefire.

Some observers in Belfast believe that the shootings are a way of letting off steam among IRA activists, who are frustrated at the slow pace of the peace process. The tactic is highly dangerous, however, because if the IRA attacked loyalist drugs dealers, Protestant paramilitaries would waste little time in retaliating.

Ministers believe that the peace process is facing a delicate phase in the run-up to the publication later this month of the report by the

former US Senator George Mitchell, head of the body which is examining decommissioning of terrorist arms. The Government will seize the initiative later month with the publication of a White Paper on the future of the RUC. The paper will address nationalist concerns that the RUC is too closely identified with the Unionists.

Kevin Myers, page 16

Leading article, page 17

School inspections may be less frequent

The Government is preparing to abandon its commitment to inspect all schools at least once every four years. Chris Woodhead, the Chief Inspector of Schools, has been asked to draw up plans by the end of the month for a "more targeted" approach to inspections. Ministers want Ofsted, the school inspection agency, to complete the first four-year cycle of assessments of all 24,000 schools in England, which began in September 1992. However, it will then be asked to concentrate on schools that need to improve. Less in-depth or less frequent visits to schools with glowing reports could bring big savings on the estimated £87 million expenditure in 1996-97.

Ofsted's assessment of primary schools has fallen well behind schedule because of a shortage of freelance inspectors. Ofsted has just recruited a second batch of 150 short-term inspectors.

The National Union of Teachers welcomed the move to review inspections but called for any savings to be channelled back into advice and support for schools.

Sixty prison suicides

Prison reformers blamed the Home Secretary for the high annual rate of suicides in the country's jails. Sixty people committed suicide in prisons in England and Wales during 1995, according to the Howard League. This was one fewer than the record number in the previous year. The league condemned Michael Howard for "irresponsible over-use of prison" and said one victim was a 16-year-old youth on remand for snatching a handbag.

Acid rain-makers

Two power stations have been condemned by the Government's conservation watchdog as among the worst in Britain for spreading acid rain, which destroys beauty spots and natural habitats. The rural protection agency English Nature says that sulphur dioxide emissions from coal-fired power stations at Rugeley, Staffordshire, and Ironbridge in Shropshire come to rest in areas as far afield as Scotland, Snowdonia, Cumbria and the Peak District.

Think-tank 'inhumane'

Proposals by Tory policy advisers to scrap employment protection legislation were condemned yesterday by Greville Janner, Labour MP and chairman of the all-party Commons employment committee. He said the plans were "disgraceful and inhumane" and predicted a rebellion by centre-left Conservative MPs if John Major were to take up the "far right" ideas, to be published next week by *Politica*, the newest of the Conservative think-tanks.

Driver killed by train

A 62-year-old woman was killed yesterday and her son injured when their car was hit by a passenger train on an unmanned level crossing. The Sprinter train from Rochdale to Liverpool ploughed into their car at Eccles, Greater Manchester. Jean Moore, 62, and Michael, 26, from Audenshaw, had to be cut from the wreckage. Mrs Moore, who had been driving, was pronounced dead at the scene. The driver and guard were treated for shock.

Fraud couple jailed

A council official and her husband who stole £109,000 in a housing benefits fraud were each jailed for two and a half years yesterday at the Old Bailey. Sheena Khan and husband Shakil, both 31, of Ilford, invented bogus claimants and landlords to defraud Newham and Waltham Forest councils in East London. Council cheques were then sent to accommodation addresses controlled by the couple.

LSO sacking settlement

A stage manager who was sacked for failing to turn up on time to an important rehearsal by the London Symphony Orchestra received an out-of-court settlement yesterday for unfair dismissal. The 90 members of the orchestra and the conductor had been unable to play a note without him: he had their instruments. Nicholas Morgan, 36, of Cardiff, who was employed by the orchestra for around seven years, said he had overslept and his van had broken down.

Ashdown rules out defector's by-election plan

By NICHOLAS WOOD
CHIEF POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

PADDY ASHDOWN last night asserted his authority over Emma Nicholson after the Liberal Democrats' latest recruit floated the possibility of a by-election in her Devon West and Torridge seat. The party leader's aides intervened swiftly to scotch such speculation after the Tory defector had said that if her constituents wanted a by-election, she would be happy to oblige.

Speaking in a BBC radio phone-in, she said: "I would be perfectly comfortable to have a by-election. Of course, what would happen would be an overwhelming majority, unbelievable, right up in the stratosphere, for the Liberal Democrats, for whom I would

be standing. I think it is a real waste of public funds. However, if sufficient of my electorate come up to me and say 'come on, let's have a by-election', I will go straight to Paddy Ashdown and discuss it with him."

But Mr Ashdown's aides later poured cold water on the prospects of a poll in the West Country seat where, as the Conservative candidate, Miss Nicholson had a 3,614 majority at the 1992 election. "We don't feel any compulsion to go down that route," one senior official said.

Senior Liberal Democrats said that the party wanted to concentrate on other tasks, such as the two by-elections pending in Hemsworth and Staffordshire South East, the May local elections, and the approaching general election. Leadership sources

added that voters, by and large, did not appreciate "unnecessary elections".

But the Tory leadership was in fighting mood yesterday, with Roger Freeman, the Public Service Minister, challenging Mr Ashdown to call a by-election and Brian Mawhinney, the Tory party chairman, telling colleagues that he believed it was the "only honourable course" to take.

Harry Greenway, Tory MP for Ealing North, said: "Given that the whole thrust of Emma Nicholson's defection was that she was taking a moral stand, she should now go all the way and quit. She now has a moral obligation more than most to resign her seat."

John Prescott, Labour's deputy leader, will today hold a press conference in Tory-held Staffordshire South East

during a visit to prepare the local party machine for a March by-election, which seems likely to cut the Government's majority further.

The parliamentary arithmetic means that John Major will become increasingly dependent on Ulster Unionist support, particularly if he loses his Commons majority later in the year.

John Taylor, the deputy leader of the Unionists, caused fresh tremors in Tory ranks yesterday by saying that his party could "easily" refuse to back the Government in a vote of confidence, the loss of which would precipitate a general election. But senior ministers doubt that the Unionists would carry out the threat.

Simon Jenkins, page 16



Nicholson: comfortable to have a fresh poll

Embassy

Continued from page 1
in the world is penniless, although other countries permit their citizens to be furloughed. Nor are all of the embassy's officials affected. The CIA and Pentagon budgets have been approved, so the spooks can still work and military liaison over Bosnia can continue.

Admiral Crowe also managed to throw his Christmas party just before the shutdown, and his subsequent inhospitality has hardly been noticed during the holidays.

The most obvious result so far has been the consular section's inability to issue American visas except in emergencies. That does not generally affect British citizens who can enter America freely, but it has stranded many Asians, Africans and Middle Easterners who normally would obtain their visas from the London embassy.

Mr Peterson said: "People who have problems with visas are just being told that we cannot deal with it. There are kids who are trying to get home to their parents, but we can issue emergency passports only in the case of critical illness or death in the family. The whole situation is beginning to impose a severe constraint on people who work here."

Mr Clinton was meeting congressional leaders once again last night, but few officials were predicting an early breakthrough. Participants acknowledged privately that almost no progress was made during 13 hours of talks in the three days just before the new year.

At stake is the "Republican Revolution". Newt Gingrich, the House Speaker, and his followers want to balance the federal budget by 2002 not just to restore America's economic health but also to reverse 60 years of government growth.

Lyell and Waldegrave will fight resignation calls on Scott report

■ The long-awaited Scott report into the arms-to-Iraq affair is expected to be severely critical of ministers. Philip Webster reports

SIR NICHOLAS LYELL and William Waldegrave are to fight calls for their resignation that seem certain to follow the report next month of the long-running Scott inquiry into the arms-to-Iraq affair.

The Attorney-General and Treasury Chief Secretary, the two ministers considered to be most in Sir Richard Scott's firing line, were reported by Whitehall sources yesterday to be ready to mount a vigorous defence of their actions within hours of the report being made public.

Sir Nicholas, long considered to be vulnerable because of his role in advising ministers to sign so-called gagging orders preventing sensitive material being given to the defence in the Matrix Churchill trial three years ago, has impressed ministerial colleagues by his determination to tough it out.

Labour will use the publication of the report to keep up the pressure over the next few weeks on an embattled government with demands for the resignation of Sir Nicholas and probably Mr Waldegrave.

But the Government is planning an aggressive response to expected criticisms in the report, believing that in the renewed internal turmoil following the defection of Emma Nicholson the last thing it can afford is a Cabinet resignation.

The Attorney-General has made plain that before telling ministers such as Kenneth Clarke and Malcolm Rifkind to issue public interest immunity certificates preventing the disclosure of confidential documents he had carefully obtained the advice of the most eminent lawyers available to

the Government. Their interpretation of the way the PFI system had operated over a lengthy period was that he was that he should do what he did.

The argument of other senior lawyers that he had no authority for his actions is fiercely resisted by Sir Nicholas. The key advice to him came from the First Junior Treasury Counsel at the time, Sir John Laws, now Lord Justice Laws.

A ministerial colleague of Sir Nicholas said yesterday: "Scott may criticise the PFI system but there is clearly no open-and-shut case against Nick Lyell for the way he interpreted it. He acted in good faith."

"Surely the only case for a resignation would have been if he had acted in bad faith or

incompetently. Neither is true. He is one of the most conscientious men in the Government."

Another said: "He will be courteous but firm and clear if Scott criticises him. He believes that he acted properly."

Mr Waldegrave has launched a strong counter-attack since leaks last June of early drafts of Sir Richard's report suggested that he was likely to be accused of misleading Parliament when a Foreign Office minister because he had not disclosed that guidelines governing the sale of arms to Iraq had been relaxed.

Whitehall sources have disclosed that Mr Waldegrave has since submitted a lengthy statement to the inquiry in which he has argued strongly that the guidelines were not changed and that he therefore



Lyell and Waldegrave: ready to mount a vigorous defence when the report comes out next month

Labour aims to boost housing

By JAMES LANDALE
POLITICAL REPORTER

LABOUR will launch fresh proposals next month aimed at restoring confidence in the housing market. Mortgage-holders facing repayment difficulties will be offered a package of measures to help them keep their homes while potential first-time buyers can expect better safeguards to entice them into the market.

The move comes ahead of a conference on the house market in March when Labour will try to capitalise on what it sees as the Government's failure to protect homeowners.

Nick Raynsford, the Labour housing spokesman, published a report yesterday showing that 300,000 homes had been repossessed since John Major came to power in November 1991. More than 1,000 people are now losing their homes each week.

Labour proposals include: □ Better safeguards against homeowners being sold the wrong mortgage; □ Mr Raynsford said too many homeowners were locked into "problematic" mortgages; □ Changes in the type of mortgages available so that repayments could be more flexible;

□ More effective private mortgage insurance to compensate for the abolition last October of the income support safety net for new borrowers; □ More options for homeowners to share equity with others, such as a housing association, in an attempt to cut repayments when times are hard.

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Labour aims to boost housing

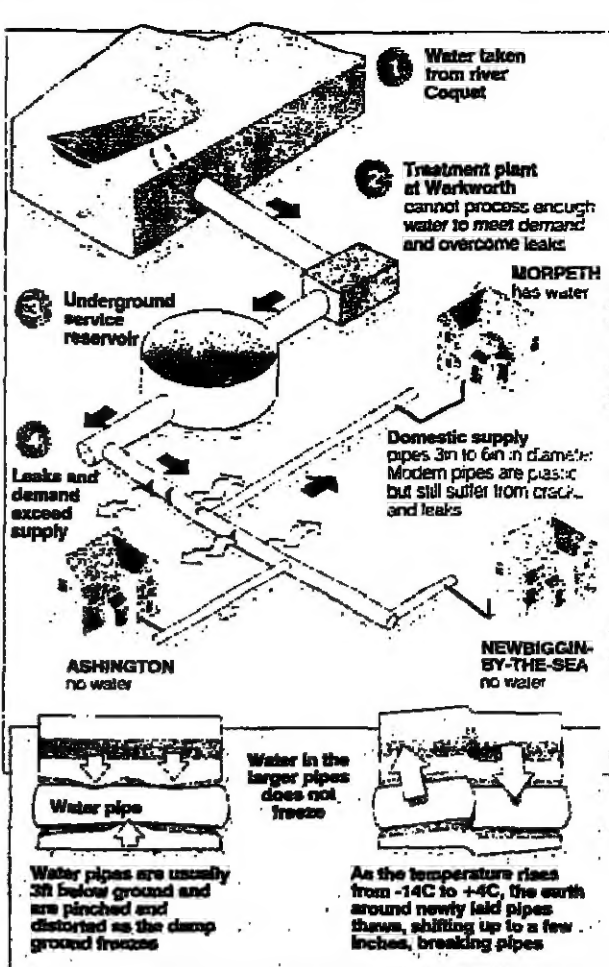
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fight port

Plastic pipes that burst were only recently installed to replace leaky, cast iron system



End of the line: residents of Ashington, Northumberland, queue for water from a bowser yesterday after supplies were cut off. Water companies blamed "ground shift", which caused underground pipes to break in the sudden thaw

Water companies blame quick thaw for shortage

BY NICK NUTTALL, TECHNOLOGY CORRESPONDENT

FREAK weather and a phenomenon called "ground shift" were blamed yesterday by the water companies for the shortages in supplies that brought misery to thousands of homes and businesses.

The companies, struggling to restore services after thousands of mains burst across northern Britain, said the ground had thawed too quickly. This caused small mains pipes to be twisted and broken as the ground expanded in the freeze and then suddenly contracted in the overnight thaw.

Some of the pipes were more vulnerable because they were new. North East Water had recently installed some plastic pipes to replace leaky cast iron ones. The pipes had not yet bedded in so the pressure of the expanding,

frozen, soil was uneven, exaggerating the twisting effect. But Canadian water experts, who deal throughout the winter with temperatures far lower than are seen here, said the depth at which British companies lay their pipes must also be partly to blame.

Many of the mains which have burst in Britain are the smaller, 3in diameter, pipes running from the road into homes and offices at a depth of 3ft.

Wayne Jackson, general manager of water utility serving Toronto, where temperatures were yesterday below -20C, said that it was not possible to construct a totally burst-free water system.

He said the Canadians put their mains at a depth of 5ft, which is below the freezing or

frost line, to avoid "ground shift". British water companies said it added to costs to dig any deeper but guidelines, based on advice from the Water Research Centre at Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire, may now be reviewed.

Temperatures fell to -14C before suddenly thawing to 4C, causing the ground to shift by several inches. Pipes were pushed and twisted, causing some to fracture in the middle and many to break at the joints.

Anne Kirby, of the Society of British Water Industries, said yesterday that using plastic pipes had probably reduced rather than increased the risk of bursts. Cast iron is less flexible and more likely to crack, compared with the modern ductile iron or poly-

ethylene materials which are 12 per cent more flexible.

Ms Kirby said that in Canada and Russia the thaws were also far more even and slower than this week's sudden cold snap and thaw.

One of the consequences of the bursts has been that the Northumberland towns of Newbiggin-by-the-Sea and Ashington have been cut off. A North East Water spokesman said that the towns were supplied by water from the River Coquet at Warkworth which, after being treated, is piped to a service reservoir. But the burst pipes mean the company cannot supply enough treated water to the reservoir for all the area's customers and "these two villages are, unfortunately, at the end of the pipe".

Cowboy plumbers cash in

PLUMBERS have been cashing in on the thaw in northeast England by charging average labour fees of £50 an hour — double their usual rate. Householders were warned by the National Association of Plumbing, Heating and Mechanical Services Contractors to beware of unscrupulous traders.

A spokesman said: "We are incensed that plumbers are ripping people off and damaging the reputation of the industry." Only plumbers that pass a quality test are allowed to join the association or the Institute of Plumbers. Complaints about members could lead to them being expelled. Both organisations have a code of practice which is registered with the Office of Fair Trading.

Executive's wife directs bucketful of ire at press

By JOANNA BAILE

DESPITE calls to save water, the wife of Northumbrian Water's chief executive used a bucket of the precious commodity to hurl in anger yesterday.

David Cranston tried in vain to stop his wife Jennifer throwing the water at Raoul Dixon, a press photographer, as he took pictures in the drive of their home. After narrowly missing his target, the blue bucket shattered on the ground and Mrs Cranston stormed into the house, slamming the front door.

Mr Cranston, who had earlier given Mr Dixon permission to photograph buckets of water on his front doorstep, turned away and tried to hide his embarrassment. Like hundreds of other residents in Darras Hall estate in Ponteland, Northumberland, the Cranstons were carefully



Mrs Cranston: hurled precious commodity

conserving water. Mrs Cranston had told reporters: "We are being sensible with water just like everyone else."

The water was cut off at their detached home on Monday night, although it came back at low pressure yesterday morning. Mr Cranston, 59, who earns £189,000 a year,

had proudly explained that they had filled buckets from their tiny pond to flush toilets. He said: "We are using the taps as little as possible."

After his public relations plan backfired, he said: "There was a misunderstanding about a photograph and my wife was gravely upset. I am fair game, but she is not."

Mr Dixon, 20, said: "I went to the door with a reporter. Mrs Cranston answered and spoke about how she and her husband had been trying to conserve water. She asked us not to take pictures of the buckets of pond water on the doorstep. Her husband arrived home as we were leaving and agreed to an interview and to pictures of the buckets."

"Mrs Cranston had taken two buckets into the house and was returning for the third when she saw me taking pictures. She grabbed the full bucket and hurled it at me."

Rail commuters held rape suspect

By A STAFF REPORTER

PASSENGERS chased and caught an alleged rapist after his terrified victim banged on the windows of their late-night commuter train, a court was told yesterday.

When the train arrived at Anerley station, south London, two British Rail drivers saw Lee Coleman, 25, on top of a 34-year-old Stock Exchange executive apparently having sex with her on a bench, Ian Darling, for the prosecution, said.

As the train pulled to a halt the drivers, in their mirror, saw the woman push the man off, and run to the nearest carriage, banging on the window for help.

The drivers also saw Mr Coleman run off over a bridge. Commuters left their carriages to give chase, and marched him back to face his victim, Mr Darling told the Old Bailey. In tears she told him "you know what you did, you know what you threatened me with, you men think you can get what you want". Mr Coleman later claimed to police the woman had kissed him and demanded sex. But he repeatedly denied lying on top of her on the bench,

claiming he only sat next to her. Mr Darling told the jury this was not what the BR drivers saw. Mr Coleman, of South Norwood, south London, denies rape.

The jury was told the executive had been drinking with friends in the City last May, and had about five glasses of wine. She missed her train and so had a gin and tonic with friends at the station before getting a train just after 10pm.

However, she fell asleep and missed her stop. She got off at Norwood Junction and began talking to a friend on her mobile phone. As she did Mr Coleman approached and offered to help. At first he seemed "a perfect gentleman", helping her to the platform and getting on to the train with her, Mr Darling said.

At Anerley he got off with her but when she tried to call her friend again he prevented her. When the woman sat on a bench to try to call her friend he pushed her down, saying: "Kiss me and I will let you go." She agreed hoping he would go away. But, claimed Mr Darling, he raped her. The trial continues.

Murder gang 'seen in club'

By ADRIAN LEE

FRIENDS of Evon Berry, the father of three shot dead as he tried to stop a mugging, said yesterday he was murdered by a criminal gang that had travelled to Bristol to steal the takings from a New Year's Eve party.

Last night police said they were investigating reports that a group of men was seen brandishing guns in a nightclub, a mile from the murder scene in St Paul's, 90 minutes before Mr Berry was killed.

Armed police went to the Millionaires Club, in Stapleton Road, Easton, where 200 revellers were celebrating the new year. No one was arrested or guns recovered. An Avon and Somerset police spokesman said: "We monitored people leaving but there was a big crowd so we had to be cautious. The last thing we wanted was a gun battle."

Mr Berry, a caretaker at the Malcolm X Community Centre, in St Paul's, was shot in the head with a .32 calibre bullet from a handgun as he tried to intervene in the mugging. He was walking home with two friends after supervising a party at the centre, where he was also well known

for his voluntary work. Former colleagues and friends gathered yesterday to lay flowers at the spot where the 37-year-old died and paid tribute to the "gentle giant".

They said he was due to begin work on a drugs awareness project for young people. Mr Berry, born in Jamaica but a resident of Bristol since he was a young boy, was described as one of the most highly respected men in the black community.

One card, placed with flowers, in Grosvenor Road where he died, said simply: "Respect always big man." Another said: "To a gentle giant, you will be missed."

The black community has promised its full co-operation in the hunt for those responsible. "These were not just street muggers," said a friend of the dead man. "They came to do something big and it never happened. They were frustrated and Evon was in the wrong place at the wrong time."

A police source said: "It is highly likely the killer came from outside the local community, otherwise we would have expected to have heard more by now."

Museum stops Drake from sinking

By NIGEL HAWKES
SCIENCE EDITOR

THE 400th anniversary of the death of Sir Francis Drake will see his tattered reputation revived by the National Maritime Museum with a major exhibition.

Drake has been branded as a pirate and slave trader by those anxious to impose 20th century standards on the past. Never exactly popular with the Spanish, whose colonies he sacked and whose Armada he helped destroy, he was last year denied a celebratory stamp by the Post Office.

Plans to recover his body from its watery grave off Panama for reburial at Westminster Abbey have been rebuffed by the Admiralty.



Drake: cruel tyrant or a master tactician?

Renowned for his sang-froid in playing bowls as the Armada approached, Drake has been hailed below the waterline by political correctness despite recognition of

his skills as a tactician and navigator. The Greenwich exhibition, Blood, Sea and Ice, which also celebrates Captain James Cook and the Arctic explorer Sir John Franklin, opens on January 28. It will include Drake's Drum, a side drum carried on his last voyage which by legend is supposed to beat when England is in danger of invasion, and a sea chest from the *Golden Hind*.

Dr Eric Kentley, organiser of the exhibitions, said: "It is a tribute to three men who shaped the destiny of our country, and the world, by battle, exploration, navigation and discovery."

John Cummins, reader in Spanish at the University of Aberdeen and the author of a recent biography of Drake,

admits that even in his lifetime plenty of people disliked him. In an article in *History Today*, he quotes a contemporary account of Drake's circumnavigation of the world describing him as "a tyrannous and cruel tyrant" capable of murder, venom, and "blood spilling". But Dr Cummins believes that many who disliked Drake did so because of his humble upbringing and unwillingness to bend the knee to social superiors.

There are two black marks, Dr Cummins admits: Drake's desertion of his comrades under Spanish fire after the battle of San Juan de Ulua when he simply sailed away, and his execution at sea of Thomas Doughty on trumped-up charges.

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Bottomley gambles on lottery's appeal to Middle Britain

By ALEXANDRA FREAN, MEDIA CORRESPONDENT

VIRGINIA BOTTOMLEY is to appeal directly to Middle Britain in an attempt to regain the moral high ground for the National Lottery.

The Heritage Secretary will ask Women's Institutes, Round Table organisations and Rotary and Lions Clubs to help to bring the benefits of the lottery to every village and town. Stung by growing criticism that too much lottery cash has gone to large-scale, elitist and urban projects, she is sending out two million leaflets to leaders of local businesses and community groups to explain how small organisations can apply for lottery grants.

Mrs Bottomley is keen to ensure that the game is perceived as a "people's lottery". She hopes that businessmen and women in organisations such as rotary clubs will use their social and professional contacts with local authorities, councils and trades people to help to put together small bids for lottery funding.

A spokesman said: "She wants to reach out to Middle England and to show people that the lottery can be used as a way of regenerating local economies as well as improving community facilities." Mrs Bottomley also wants local

business leaders to take an active role in putting together lottery bids. Every company is being urged to give one of their best members of staff responsibility for co-ordinating a lottery strategy.

Mrs Bottomley believes that small firms have a strong vested interest. Grants given to small-scale community schemes will benefit local builders and crafts people and suppliers. About 20 per cent of the work undertaken by architects at the moment, for example, is connected with lottery bids.

The £65,000 leaflet drop, which is being funded by the Heritage Department and the



Bottomley: sending out two million leaflets

five lottery distributing bodies, will be launched tomorrow. Entitled *It could be your good cause*, they provide brief case-histories of successful lottery bids from small groups and explain where to apply.

Mrs Bottomley hopes the initiative will counter continuing criticism of the record £40 million roll-over jackpot expected in Saturday's draw. A spokeswoman for Camelot, the lottery operator, said that sales had increased substantially yesterday. "It's a possibility that nine out of ten people aged 16 or over will play this week," she said.

The Anglican Bishop of Wakefield, the Right Rev Nigel McCulloch, yesterday renewed his calls for an end to the "obscene" prizes made possible by roll-overs, which encouraged "sheer greed".

"The lottery is not about making the public happy — it is a business set up to make its shareholders rich," the Bishop wrote in the *Daily Mail*. "Camelot, with the complicity of the BBC, tempts an unusually gullible British public with dreams of the happiness that money alone can bring. It is one of the oldest lies."

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Arthritis research 'likely to cure most victims'

By NIGEL HAWKES, SCIENCE EDITOR

MOST cases of arthritis are likely to be cured within the next decade after spectacular progress in care and treatment, a leading British specialist forecast yesterday.

"The proportion of people who get better is increasing, and the number who could gain substantial benefits is nearing 100 per cent," said Professor Paul Dieppe of Bristol University.

Introducing a research review by the Arthritis and Rheumatism Council on its 60th anniversary, he admitted that most sufferers are not yet cured in spite of the progress made "but the research advances give us real reasons for being optimistic that in the future most will be cured."

Professor Dieppe said that two of the main leads emerging from current research were the production of enzyme inhibitors to eliminate the chemicals that erode bones and joints, and the development of ways to switch off the immunological processes behind the progress of arthritis. The most obvious success stories so far had been the development of replacement joints.

It was now believed that researchers were on the threshold of another leap forward in treatment, either through progress in therapy pioneered by the council, which attacks the substances that cause damage to joints, or through genetic work, which is providing clues to the cause of the disease.

The council is contributing £17 million a year to arthritis research. The disease in its various forms affects millions of people in Britain, with 600,000 suffering from rheumatoid arthritis and 1,500,000 from osteoarthritis.

At the council's diamond jubilee conference in Hammersmith, west London, was the actor Andrew Sachs, 65, alias Manuel in *Fawlty Towers*. He praised the courage of young sufferers he had met in his work for the Hospital for Sick Children, Great Ormond Street.

small, he said, for the "substantial additional expenditure in terms of police time and Crown Prosecution Service time that would be incurred. It is a crude rule but it applies whether you are talking about a caretaker or a chief officer."

In a letter to parents, the Rev Anne Gordon, the Leasland governors' chairwoman, said: "We set high standards of honesty as an example to our children. Staff and governors have been particularly upset by this."

Church school head resigns after £500 theft is uncovered

By A STAFF REPORTER

A HEAD TEACHER resigned after admitting taking money raised for her former school, it was revealed yesterday. Mrs Karen Reynolds has since repaid the missing £500.

Her resignation from St John's Church of England primary school in Gosport, Hampshire, had been attributed to sickness. Police were not called in.

The money came from a fundraising event for the town's Leasland Infant Church of England School in the summer of 1994. It was

found to be missing only after Mrs Reynolds left to run neighbouring St John's. Leasland governors called in auditors, and Mrs Reynolds resigned three months ago when they presented her with the results.

Hampshire County Council yesterday confirmed the reason for her departure. Peter Coles, the chief education officer, said: "Money went missing. There was an investigation and Mrs Reynolds admitted having taken the money." The sum was too



Jasmine Gardner, who first walked unaided on Christmas Day at the age of 22 months

First steps give family extra reason for a celebration

By A STAFF REPORTER

THE first steps of Jasmine Gardner, aged 22 months, were particularly special for her family because arthritis had prevented her from even crawling at times.

Jasmine, whose juvenile chronic arthritis was diagnosed at the age of 16 months, walked unaided for the first time on Christmas Day as her parents and brothers were eating dinner.

Her mother Angela said yesterday: "She has been trying to walk for some time but it has been too painful. When

ever she got very ill she would lose any ability to crawl. On Christmas Day I let go of her and she started to walk all around the table. It was absolutely brilliant."

Mrs Gardner, 38, and her husband Andrew brought Jasmine to London yesterday for a conference to mark the diamond jubilee of the Arthritis and Rheumatism Council.

Mrs Gardner, of Wellingsborough, Northamptonshire, said: "Jasmine was taken very ill in January last year. She had been admitted

to hospital with a high fever and a rash which they thought was an allergic reaction.

"She was finally diagnosed in July. The doctors could not say what the outcome will be. We don't know if she is going to develop problems with her joints later on in life or whether she is going to grow out of it."

Jasmine's twin sister died after they were born three months prematurely. Mr Gardner, 40, said: "Jasmine is very well at the moment. The best she has ever been."

Rushdie claims his second Whitbread award

By DALYA ALBERGE, ARTS CORRESPONDENT

SALMAN RUSHDIE has won the Whitbread novel award for a second time, in the twenty-fifth year of the literary prizes. Lord Jenkins of Hillhead has taken the biography prize for his book on Gladstone.

They are among five £2,000 category winners whose work goes forward for the overall £21,000 Whitbread Book of the Year prize, to be announced on January 23.

Rushdie won his award for *The Moor's Last Sigh*, a tragicomic story set in modern India and Moorish Granada. He first received the award in 1988 for *The Satanic Verses*.

Rushdie said yesterday that he was "pleased" for the book, explaining that he had a "parental feeling" towards it. "I was very excited when I finished it. I did feel that it was good," he said.

He was happy to hear people talk of the "enjoyment" of reading it. "I have always felt there was no reason why good literature should not be good and enjoyable," Rushdie said, commenting on the divide between serious and popular literature. Awards such as Whitbread would help to take good literature beyond the literary coterie, he said.

The Whitbread judges, including the author Candia McWilliam and Joe Sinyor, managing director of Dillons, said: "Rushdie gives us a wonderful display of verbal ingenuity and unleashes an explosion of creative energy." Also on the shortlist were Martin Amis's *The Information*, Pat Barker's *The Ghost Road*, the 1995 Booker Prize winner, *In Every Face I Meet* by Justin Cartwright and Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Unconscious*.

The biography of Gladstone by Lord Jenkins, leader of the Liberal Democrats in the House of Lords, was described by the judges as supremely elegant. Bernard O'Donoghue won the Whitbread poetry award for *Gunpowder*. Kate Atkinson won the first novel award for *Behind the Scenes at the Museum*; and Michael Morpurgo took the Beefeater children's novel award for *The Wreck of the Zanzibar*.

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Shaking all over in a sober new year



Dr Thomas Stuttaford

THE time for new year resolutions also brings a spate of delirium tremens (DTs), the acute toxic psychosis when a formerly heavy drinker pays the price for years of alcohol dependency.

New year resolutions too often prompt old souls to reconsider their lifestyle and bad habits, and as a result to give up the drink suddenly, even if their resolve was only "to take a month off".

Paradoxically, DTs do not affect a patient during a drinking bout, but strike after it is over. However, it is unusual to see it in people who have not also been drinking heavily for several years. The patient may become fearful, deluded and incoherent and there may be changes in their level of consciousness. DTs are associated with physical, as well as mental signs; an

epileptic fit is often the first indication of trouble ahead but the patients may also run a temperature, suffer cramps and abdominal pain.

Hallucinations may be particularly interesting to the doctor but are always terrifying to the patient. Often they are associated with severe delirium in which the sufferer is speaking in a rambling and incoherent fashion. But equally the patient often sounds rational and is able to explain clearly, and explicitly,

the ghastly images that he or she is seeing or hearing. Hallucinations can either be auditory — the hearing of voices, for instance — or visual or tactile.

Seeing, and feeling, rats crawling all over the bed, the floor and even their own body is a common visual hallucination, and one which struck a journalist who had been sent to the United States and decided to take the opportunity to give up the booze. As is usually the case, these symp-

ptoms started within 48 hours of putting the good resolution into practice.

Over Christmas I was told an even more fascinating example of DTs by a retired Irish surgeon. At the end of the Second World War, while in the Navy, he was asked to escort back from the Far East a senior officer who had become an alcoholic.

As they approached the English Channel his charge thought the time had come to give up alcohol. Within hours the senior officer was suffering from the Lilliput syndrome in which everybody around him seemed to be only inches tall; he was terrified.

The surgeon thereafter was able to understand why many of his Irish patients professed to believe so determinedly in the existence of "the little people".

Army commander fights gay move

By MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

A SENIOR Army commander has called for an attack "on the flanks of the homosexual fraternity" as part of a campaign to stop the Government from lifting the ban on gays serving in the Armed Forces. In an outspoken letter to a Ministry of Defence unit preparing a report on the issue for ministers, Brigadier John Patrick warned of the need to "fight off the strong views of a small but vociferous minority".

Writing as commander of 145 (Home Counties) Brigade, based at Aldershot, Brigadier Patrick is one of many senior officers who have voiced strong aversion to any change in the current ban on homosexuality in the Services.

His letter, which was leaked yesterday, was addressed to the MoD's homosexual policy assessment team which, under its chairman, Paul Shultz, a civil servant, is drawing up options for ministers in the event of a decision to change the long-standing policy.

A survey carried out throughout the three Services is believed to show substantial support for keeping the

ban. Brigadier Patrick said that the minority of people demanding a lifting of the ban "can stir up the tolerant judiciary and media to such an extent that the Armed Forces are forced to accept levels of immorality and unnatural behaviour that are unacceptable to the majority of members of the forces, and indeed the country".

He added: "The flanks of the homosexual fraternity must be attacked by all sections of society, to include churchmen taking an aggressive and more serious stand against immorality and the medical profession providing condemning evidence of the dangers of unnatural sexual conduct."

He suggested international lawyers "of the highest calibre" should be employed to represent the case of those fighting to keep the ban. In November last year, a letter from Admiral Sir Hugo White, former Commander-in-Chief, Fleet, in which he warned of the threat of sexual corruption of the sexually immature in the Royal Navy if the ban was lifted, was also leaked to the press.

HRT 'does not make women fat'

By JEREMY LAURANCE

LONG-TERM use of hormone replacement therapy to counter the effects of the menopause does not lead to an increase in weight, researchers have found.

Fear of weight gain is one of the principal reasons why women refuse HRT or give it up soon after starting. However, the first study to examine the long-term effects of the treatment has found no evidence that it adds pounds.

One in five post-menopausal women in Britain takes HRT and the proportion is expected to grow to one in three by the end of the decade. But there is a widespread belief among women and doctors that the reduction in menopausal symptoms is bought at the expense of an increase in girth.

THE WEEKEND STARTS HERE



FRIDAY

IN THE TIMES

On the pop page: predictions for sound success in 1996

PLUS The Valerie Grove interview

SATURDAY

IN THE TIMES



Matthew Parris in Bolivia in a travel issue of the Magazine

PLUS Sailing special in Weekend and win a Topper dinghy in 1015

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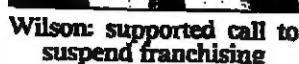
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By JOANNA BAILE

TRAIN companies were accused yesterday of widespread overcharging on fares after the break-up of British Rail. The Consumers' Association said its findings were so serious that rail privatisation should be postponed for an urgent review of ticketing methods.

Investigators made more than 250 inquiries or ticket purchases at 28 stations or information points around the country, to check if companies were honouring a commitment to quote rivals' fares where they are cheaper. A report to be published tomorrow in *Which?* magazine says that the cheapest available fare was not provided in 90 per cent of cases. The total of

Fares quoted or charged came: to £10.13, if "unbiased" sales advice had been followed, the figure would have been £7.591. The average overcharge was £24 and the highest was £70.20. In some cases, the association was sold invalid tickets.

"The new-book British Rail failed our test miserably," says the report. "In many cases, the overpriced fares given were more than double the cheapest fare which is listed clearly in the National Fares Manual used by train staff."

As the rail network is divided up for privatisation, many train companies are expected to pass on their costs on similar routes. The companies are obliged to give information about the cheapest ticket on a route, even if it is for a service run by a

rial and even if the journey time is longer. The train companies' willingness to meet these conditions was put to the test in late August and early September. In most cases, questions were put to sales points run by companies that set the higher of two competing fares.

Which tested five different routes: London-Bristol, London to Carmarthen and Swansea, London-Exeter, London-Bath and London-Birmingham. While the cheapest fare on the London to Bath route was South Wales and West's at £22, the London to Exeter ticket offered by London, South East and East was the cheapest, at £33.

Five days later — an interval the fare was £45 — the cheapest fare for the service needed.

In a letter to Brian Wilson, a

Labour transport spokesman, the Consumer Association's parliamentary officer Meriel Thorne said: "We were astonished by the results. The degree of misinformation by the train-operating companies suggests they are either flouting their licensing conditions for commercial gain or that their staff are undertrained, inexperienced or incompetent. Either way, the present arrangement is certainly not working in the passengers' interest."

Mr Wilson said: "I fully support the Consumers' Association's call for franchising to be suspended in the light of this astonishing finding. We must have the freedom to choose the operator that we want, but it is essential that individual operators should have no interest in maintaining the benefits which flow from

having a national rail network. It is the Tories press on with the rail fragmentation, the quality of service and information throughout the country will decline rapidly. They must heed the conclusions of this report or pay the penalty."

Keith Bill, secretary of the Save Our Railways campaign, said of the survey findings: "We're not surprised at all. British Rail is being broken up into 100 different competing pieces, changes are happening every day, and the system is falling into chaos because of staff reductions and cost-cutting in preparation for privatisation."

Passenger numbers being given the wrong tickets and overcharged. We estimate that they are losing hundreds of thousands of pounds a

year. Unless the drive to privatise is stopped and sanity returned, it's going to get a lot worse."

Barry Doe, who worked with *Which?* on the investigation, said: "The ticketing system is too big to be workable and too complicated for the average booking clerk, despite the use of computers. Some of the InterCity fare differences are staggering. If you travel at different times and on different routes, there are dozens of different possibilities to choose from. Most people are completely unaware of this.

There must also be an element of bias creeping in as these clerks are being paid by one party and are employed by another. It's not fair to give information on that company's fares first."

Learners must pass 40-minute theory test before driving

BY KEVIN EASON, MOTORING EDITOR

QUESTIONS that thousands of learner drivers will have to answer in a written examination before they can take to the roads were disclosed for the first time yesterday.

Candidates will have up to 40 minutes to complete their questions, with a different paper for each category of learner: mopeds, motorcycles, and car, lorry, bus or coach drivers. The £70 million contract to administer the tests over the next five years was awarded yesterday to DriveSafe, a new company that will set up 130 centres to test more than one million learner drivers a year.

Already learners are rushing to take their tests to avoid answering the 35 multiple-

choice questions, selected randomly from more than 600 drawn from the Highway Code, but also demanding knowledge of driver attitudes, alcohol, fatigue and how vehicles affect the environment.

BSM, Britain's biggest driving school, said that the four-month waiting list for tests could grow as people panic to get the July 1 deadline introduced. Nobody yet knows how many questions they will have to answer correctly to proceed to the practical driving test, but many learners face an examination with paper and pencil that they have not had since they left school.

The driving test was intro-

duced on June 1, 1935, when the roads were virtually empty, motorways had not been invented and most cars had three gears and only enough power to carry a family of four at up to 50mph. Then motorists could get a full licence if they remembered their hand signals and avoided hitting stationary objects. Now there are more than 24 million vehicles, many capable of exceeding 100mph.

The theory test is currently limited to a few questions asked by the examiner from the passenger seat after the practical driving test is completed. With most European countries already operating a written examination, the Gov-

A When going straight ahead at a junction, you should (1) signal right on approach and then left to leave roundabout (2) signal left as you pass left before the one you will take (3) signal left as you leave off roundabout (4) signal left on approach to roundabout and keep signal on until you leave.

B When overtaking a motorcyclist, you should: (1) try to pass on a bend (2) move to opposite side of road (3) pass on a bend (4) if possible, give as much room as you would for a car.

C To supervise a learner, you must select two: (1) have had a full licence for at least three years (2) be an approved driving instructor (3) be 21 or over (4) hold an advanced driving certificate.

D When decided by oncoming

headlights (2) you should (1)
 brake lights (2) drive faster (1)
 oncoming car (3) slow down or
 stop (4) flash your lights.

E You have two children and
 their parents in your car. Who is
 responsible for ensuring the
 children wear seatbelts (1) the
 parents (2) you the driver (3)
 the front passenger (4) the
 children?

F In fog light in daylight you should
 use (1) side lights (2) full beam
 headlights (3) hazard lights (4)
 dipped headlights.

G You should use a hand-held
 mobile telephone if (1) you
 are on a motor road (2) a
 vehicle has an automatic
 gearchange (3) you need
 to make an emergency call (4)
 you are on a minor road.

H Answer: A-2; B-4; C-1 and 3;
 D-5; E-2; F-4; G-1;

abled and those with dyslexia will get special help while papers will be printed in Welsh and six other ethnic minority languages.

The six-month period of adjustment from July 1 so that the Driving Standards Agency, which awarded the contract, can assess how well the tests work and are administered. During that time, learners will be able to take their practical examination before the written test to avoid a backlog.

DriveSafe will set up the test centres, collect the fees of between £13 and £15, and print and mark the tests. The company, a joint venture between Capita plc and the JHP Group - will also collect data for future research.



Businessman weeps over fatal break-in

BY MICHAEL HORSNELL

A BUSINESSMAN involved in a fatal struggle with an alleged burglar he disturbed during a break-in at his home wept yesterday as he told how the experience had left him "scarred for life".

Niklos Baumgartner, 53, from Ockbrook, Derby, was speaking for the first time since the death of Robert Ingham, 22, at his five-bedroomed house on Saturday. At a press conference at the office of Stuart Barlow, his

solicitor, Mr Baumgartner shuffled in with a plaster cast on one wrist and a black eye suffered in the struggle. When asked to describe what effect the incident had had, he said: "I will never be a man again."

Mr Baumgartner, a Hungarian, broke down as his solicitor explained that although police had released him without charge, papers were being forwarded to the Crown Prosecution Service for consideration. Mr Barlow said his client could therefore answer no questions concerning the incident.

The well-known local businessman, who runs a business laying tennis courts at homes around the country, said his wrist was broken in the scuffle. He said: "My body is full of bruises all over. I have black eyes and it is a job to see. I was terrified. I have broken down several times and am shaking like a leaf. I am frightened — my life is shattered." Mr Baumgartner then began to shake uncontrollably and was helped from

the room on the point of collapse. His solicitor said: "Mr Baumgartner has experienced a terrifying ordeal and asks that his privacy and that of his wife be respected by all members of the press in order that he can make as speedy a recovery as possible."

A post-mortem examination on Mr. Ingham has revealed that he died from a neck injury consistent with Mr. Baumgartner's description of the struggle. Detectives have found signs of a forced entry at the house where he lives with his wife Linda, 46.

Drink-driving rate rises in half police areas

POLICE forces analysing yesterday's drink-drive figures discovered wide disparities between areas with some recording an increase in offences and others markedly down.

Northumbria's rate of arrests fell by almost half, and Merseyside and Scotland were also substantially down. But drink-driving offences rose in about half the police areas reporting, including Suffolk, Lincolnshire, Dorset, North Yorkshire, Hampshire, Gloucestershire, Durham, Bedfordshire and Devon and Cornwall.

The pattern of offences seemed in part to follow the sweep of intensely cold weather, which might have encouraged motorists to retreat to the warmth of their cars instead of

■ Regional police recorded widely differing failure rates for breath tests this Christmas, reports Kevin Eason

gambling on the uncertainty of public transport.

Drinkdrivers were more likely to be middle-aged, outwardly respectable professionals. Better detection of likely offenders might also account for the rise in offences in traditionally "soft" areas.

The drink-drive figures area by area are:

- Avon and Somerset: 6 per cent of nearly 600 tests positive.
- Bedfordshire: 62 motorists positive (69 last Christmas).
- Cambridgeshire: 37 drivers positive (51 last year); eight involved in accidents.

- ❑ Cheshire: 290 positive out of 9,690 tests (3 per cent); 24 drink-related accidents.
- ❑ Cleveland: 30 positive from 1,080 tests (58 from 1,475 last year). Three drink-related accidents.
- ❑ Devon and Cornwall: 130 positive, 20 per cent increase; 35 drink-related accidents (27 per cent up).
- ❑ Dorset: 125 of 1,574 drivers tested failed (7.9 per cent compared with 4 per cent last year).
- ❑ Durham: 52 positive (40 last year). Twenty drink-related accidents.
- ❑ Dfied/Powis: 38 arrests, five

- Essex: 83 out of 4,526 drivers over limit, down by 35 per cent.
- Gloucestershire: 53 drivers (41 last year) positive from 1,030 tests — almost double last year's testing.
- Greater Manchester: 336 arrests, down from 352.
- Gwent: 56 positive or refused sample, 3.9 per cent of more than 1,400 tests.
- Hampshire: 176 positive tests, up by 25 per cent.
- Hertfordshire: down 22 per cent at 53, 15 fewer than last Christmas. Nine drivers arrested after accidents.
- Kent: 100 drivers out of 1,254 over limit, a rate of 8 per cent (6.6 per cent last year).
- Lancashire: 289 positive, in-

crease of 20; 54 drink-related accidents.

- **Lincolnshire:** 49 positive (45 out of 100); 1,600 tests; 14 drink-related accidents.
- **Merseyside:** 36 positive out of 3,223 tested (1.1 per cent) between 1.8 and 28.
- **Metropolitan area:** 180 positive tests, up from 812 last year; 135 drink-related accidents.
- **Norfolk:** 102 positive (92 last year) since December 4.
- **Northamptonshire:** 28 positive (61 last year).
- **North Wales:** 65 positive or refusing to take test (92 last Christmas).
- **North Yorkshire:** 74 positive (92 last year); ten drink-related accidents.
- **Scotland:** 970 positive, 13 per cent of 75,735 tests from beginning of December.
- **South Wales:** 125 (117 last

- year) in more than 1,500 road-side checks (918 last year).
- South West: 130 positive, increase of 19.3 per cent.
- South Yorkshire: 95 positive tests (94 last year); 26 drink-related accidents.
- Suffolk: 61 out of 1,314 drivers positive between December 18 and January 1 (fewer than 5 per cent), compared with 55 of 921 last year (6 per cent).
- West Midlands: 118 arrested (157 last year) from 1,941 tests since December 5.
- Thames Valley (Oxfordshire, Berkshire and Buckinghamshire): 186 positive, 35 more than last year, (36 in accidents).
- West Mercia (Shropshire, Hereford and Worcester): 66 positive, 93 last year; 21 in accidents.
- Wiltshire: 42 arrested (60 last year); ten alcohol-related accidents.

MP urges ban on alcohol juice ads

BY ALEXANDRA FREAN, MEDIA CORRESPONDENT

LABOUR has called for a ban on advertisements for the new alcoholic lemonades, fruit juices and colas, which it believes are being aimed at under-age drinkers.

The drinks, such as Hooper's Hooch made by Bass and Two Dogs made by Merrydown, are as potent as strong lager.

Nigel Griffiths, Labour's consumer affairs spokesman, has written to the Advertising Standards Association to complain about a poster campaign for Hooper's Hooch, which features a cartoon lemon character. He said the advertisements appear to breach the association's rules

on alcohol advertising, which ban "real or fictitious characters who are likely to appeal particularly to people under 18 in a way that would encourage them to drink".

The MP has also asked the association and the Director-General of Fair Trading to investigate the sale and marketing of the drinks.

Ian Morris, a director of communications for Bass, denied that Hooper's Hooch was being aimed at under-age drinkers. "If adults were to get the perception that it was a teenage product they would not drink it because it would not fit in with their lifestyle," he said.

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Pollution, poachers and soaring human population pose increased threat to animals across globe

Rare species disappearing without trace

By Nick Nuttall, Environment Correspondent

TWENTY rare and exotic creatures could become extinct this year. The British centre monitoring the world's wildlife said yesterday that the animals were "critically endangered" by pollution, poaching and the booming human population.

Among the 21 are a small termite-eating marsupial called the numbat, the Mediterranean Monk seal and a fish from a tributary of the Danube. Several birds, the world's largest butterfly and a giant earwig are also at risk of joining the Round Island Boa snake, which disappeared from its Indian Ocean island in 1975; the Atitlan Giant Grebe, which became extinct in the 1980s in Guatemala; and Ivel's sea anemone, which disappeared from its only known home in Shorham-by-Sea, West Sussex, in 1983.

Martin Jenkins, a researcher with the World Conservation Monitoring Centre in Cambridge, said yesterday that pinpointing the next group of species which might be lost was an impossible science. "Everyone assumes that there are legions of people out there keeping an eye on things. But there are really precious few. It may be that an animal not on our list has suddenly disappeared without

anyone realising," he said. "Man has been bumping things off since he first lit fires and the Polynesians in the Pacific got rid of many species before the Europeans arrived." However, he dismissed suggestions that most extinctions were part of a natural cycle involving only marginal intervention from mankind.

"You can establish a background extinction rate from the fossil records and a species appears to have a lifespan of about four million years. The current rate is, at the very least, ten times the background rate. I would suggest that more species are at risk in 1996 than 100 years ago," Mr Jenkins said.

The biggest threats now are to species, many of which have never been chronicled in tropical forests. Dozens will be officially classed as "critically endangered" by the World Conservation Union in Gland, Switzerland, in the next few months.

Several British species, including varieties probably genetically unique, remain vulnerable. Examples include the New Forest cicada of which about ten are left, a species of ladybird spider called *Eresus niger* found at only one site, and the New Forest burnet moth found at a single site in Scotland.



The animals at risk: clockwise from top left, the numbat, black rhinoceros, Californian condor, giant panda, Scimitar-horned oryx, Chinese alligator and the Seychelles magpie robin. Twelve other species are also under particular threat of extinction

Measles suspected in death of whales

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS

MEDITERRANEAN whales are dying of an illness that scientists believe may be a type of measles, similar to an outbreak that killed more than 5,000 dolphins in 1991.

The bodies of four fin whales, or rorquals, were discovered on the shores of the western Mediterranean between September and November. The whales all appeared to have died from the same illness and exhibited similar symptoms, including spots and evidence of a high fever.

The population of fin whales (*Balaenoptera physalus*), the only Mediterranean whale, has shrunk to 3,000 and marine researchers fear the spreading virus may threaten the remaining population.

The dead whales all had reddish and spotted skins, "like the effect of acid on a coat of paint", according to a report by scientists at the University of Corsica in the French scientific journal *Research* this month. One young 60ft female whale that was washed up on a Corsican beach in September also had an abnormally high red blood-cell count, another characteristic of the measles virus.

Tissue samples have been sent to a laboratory at the University of Belfast to determine if the virus is similar to the "morbillivirus" that killed thousands of dolphins in the Mediterranean and the Atlantic. Last autumn several Pacific dolphins were also found to have died from the disease. Scientists tracking the fin whale population have noted a change in its habits over recent months. The mammals now stay close to the shore and dive only rarely.

While researchers suspect the whales are dying from a form of marine measles, pollution may also be contributing to the spread of the disease. The bloodstreams of the dead whales showed high levels of pesticides, lead, mercury and cadmium as a result of swimming in polluted waters. Such factors may have made the whales more susceptible to the virus, the report said.

The creatures unlikely to survive another year of attrition

□ **The kouprey:** a forest-dwelling ox down to between 100 and 300 animals. It lives in parts of Western Vietnam, Southern Laos, Cambodia and the Dongrak Mountains of Eastern Thailand. The only evidence that the ox still exists comes from hunters.

□ **The kakapo:** a flightless parrot, estimated to number just 47. Also known as the owl night bird, or owl parrot, it was once found across New Zealand, but the arrival of rats and stoats with settlers and the clearing of forests have devastated populations.

□ **The St Helena giant earwig:** discovered in 1798, was last seen in 1967. Samples of *Lahidura herculeana* have measured up to 78mm long, making it one of the world's largest earwigs. The population may number about 100 — if the species survives at all.

□ **The Lord Howe Island stick insect:** has been seen alive only on this island, off the coast of New South Wales. Scientists considered *Dryococelus australis* extinct some time after the First World War, but some freshly dead remains were found in the 1960s on Ball's Pyramid, about 14 miles south of the main island.

□ **The Queen Alexandra's birdwing:** the world's largest butterfly, (females have an 11in wing span, males a bit smaller) discovered in 1907 in Papua New Guinea by Lord Rothschild. *Ornithoptera alexandrae*'s habitat is about to be cleared for oil palm plantations.

□ **The baiji:** may number just a few dozen. Also known as the Yangtze river dolphin, it has been killed accidentally in significant numbers by fishing boats, and is being affected by industrial pollution and dam construction.

□ **Spix's macaw:** thought extinct in 1988, a victim of woodland clearance and the pet trade in its home state of Bahia, Brazil. But a single male was discovered in 1990 and it is hoped it may mate with a female reintroduced from a private zoo.

□ **The Mediterranean monk seal:** believed to number about 650 and highly vulnerable because of a sharp decline in fish stocks, persecution by fishermen, and urbanisation and tourism along the Mediterranean and the Aegean seas. *Monachus monachus* has abandoned many breeding beaches in favour of caves where breeding success is poor.

□ **The numbat:** or banded ant eater lives in the eucalyptus forests of South Western Australia. There are now just two populations. The termite-eating marsupial has been harmed by the introduction of cats and foxes and the destruction of its habitat for fire control.

□ **The golden bamboo lemur:** discovered in 1987 in Eastern Madagascar. *Haplorhina aureus* appears dependent on the island's unique giant bamboo for food. The forest is being cleared.

□ **The asp:** a small freshwater fish once bountiful in three Romanian rivers feeding the Arges, a tributary of the Danube, now numbers no more than a handful and may be extinct. *Romanichthys walsbyi* has been endangered by pollution and dam schemes which have harmed its habitat.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Prisoners attacked child killer

Two prisoners who attacked the child murderer Robert Black were sentenced to three years. Leeds Crown Court was told that Craig Hendley, 25, and Andrew Wilson, 22, burnt, stabbed and slashed Black. The men, who admitted grievous bodily harm, launched the attack in an effort to get transferred from Wakefield jail, where Black, 48, is serving life for killing Susan Maxwell, Caroline Hogg and Sarah Harper.

Fourth charge

A cinema owner in North Wales already accused of three killings faced a new charge of murdering Henry Roberts, 53, of Caergeiliog. Colwyn Bay magistrates remanded Peter Moore, 49, of Kinnel Bay, for another week.

Runway scare

Holidaymakers returning to Britain from Amsterdam escaped injury when their aircraft overshot a runway by 20 yards. Sixty-seven passengers and six crew disembarked normally from the plane at East Midlands airport.

JCB man jailed

An unemployed construction worker banned from driving went shopping with a JCB digger. Andrew Morris, 21, from Ossett, West Yorkshire, was jailed for five months by Morley magistrates for driving while disqualified.

Britons held

Five Britons were remanded in custody by a court in Cartagena, southeast Spain, after being charged with using a motor-launch to smuggle an estimated four tonnes of hashish resin with a street value of £2.7 million.

False alarms

Police in Kent urged parents to stop young children playing with telephones after revealing they were responsible for more than 5,000 false emergency calls last year. Officers fear they could draw resources away from genuine cases.

Flab-fighters invade clubs in the search for fitness

By JOANNA BAILE

HEALTH clubs and sports centres are enjoying their busiest time of year thanks to millions of new year resolutions to lose weight and improve fitness. Thousands of people prefer to join private health clubs rather than visit council leisure centres and, for regular users, they can offer equal value.

Holmes Place in the City of London charges £195 to join, then £650 a year for unlimited use of its fitness classes and facilities, including high-tech gym equipment, a swimming pool, a spa bath and saunas. Excluding the membership fee, that equates to £12.50 a week. There are also reduced rates for couples, off-peak and corporate membership.

At the council-run Kensington Sports Centre in central London, aerobics classes are £3.40 each and a swim is £2.10, although there is a reduced rate of £3.90 for a combined session. Three sessions a week cost £11.70.

Peter Lee-Jones, the manager of Holmes Place Barbican, which has 4,000 members,



January is the busiest month for health clubs

said: "We get many new members joining at this time of year, although we do limit the numbers. People come to us wanting to get fit and lose a few pounds. They are often very apprehensive and expect everyone to be very svelte and wearing designer leotards, but they soon find out that that is not the case. Some do get disillusioned when they do not achieve the fast weight loss they are expecting, but others

are encouraged by a noticeable increase in fitness."

Caroline Clark of The Harbour Club in Chelsea, where the Princess of Wales works out nearly every day, said: "Private clubs tend to be open longer and offer more in the way of luxury and, if you lead a busy life and want to exercise regularly, then it really is worth paying a little bit extra."

At the Harbour Club, one of the country's most expensive private health clubs, full membership costs £2,400, which is resalable, plus an annual subscription of £1,200, the equivalent of £23.25 a week.

Ms Clark added: "January is always a very busy time for us with people wanting to start the new year by getting fitter and healthier. We expect inquiries to double, if not triple. People generally start as they mean to continue and we have a low rate of people leaving."

Many people find their willpower is bolstered by paying large sums of money to join a private club. Andy Forward of the Sebastian Coe Health Park in Manchester, where the joining fee is £50 and full membership £525 a year, said: "We get lots of new members in January and the odd one drops out, but most people who pay that much stick to their exercise regime."

Club Motivation at the Moat House Hotel in Washington, Tyne and Wear, costs £100 plus £450.80 a year for peak single membership.

For families who want to get fitter, not every private health club excludes children. The Cophorne Hotel in Birmingham is one of dozens of hotels that developed leisure facilities for guests, but then cashed in on wider demand for private sport and health clubs. Membership of its 11 stations health club costs £250 a year and for a family with two children the fee is £450.

A spokesman at the club said: "The family market was once the preserve of council-run leisure centres, but for families with children who want to exercise regularly we can work out cheaper."

At the Cadbury Country Club, Bristol, it costs £100 to join, plus £325 annually for single membership, or £475 for dual membership.

Just £30

Dying wish of greatest ballerina 'was denied by money-grubbing husband'

Artist fights for return to Russia of Pavlova ashes

BY MICHAEL BINYON, DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

ANNA PAVLOVA, the greatest ballerina the world has known, made a dying wish to return to her "beloved Russia" once communism had fallen, according to new evidence a Dutch painter claims to have discovered. He has now launched a campaign to have her ashes removed from Golders Green cemetery in northwest London and reinterred in Russia.

In a newly published book, Jean Thomassen also maintains that the former prima ballerina of St Petersburg's Mariinsky Theatre was never married to her husband and business manager, Victor Dandré, whom he portrays as a money-grubbing parasite.

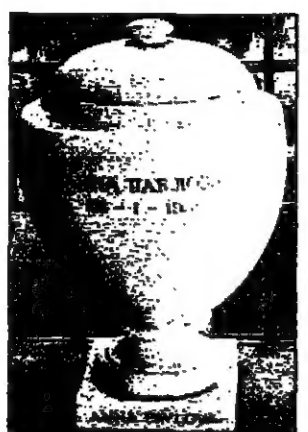
He insists that Pavlova, who died in The Hague in 1931 intestate, was the victim of Dandré's manipulation. He forced her to dance until her death, plundered her British bank account, falsified her dying words and suppressed her wish to return to Russia, according to unseen evidence Mr Thomassen says he found in Dutch archives.

His claims have met fierce opposition from Harvey Thomas, a non-executive director of the Golders Green crematorium, where Pavlova's ashes have lain in a white marble urn for the past 65 years.

Mr Thomas said there was no question of returning the ashes: they were given in perpetuity by Dandré. Under his own will, read after his death in 1944, the crematorium was entitled to "consider" removing the ashes to Russia only if a formal request were

made. No such request had been received, Mr Thomas said. "Anyway, the will stipulated that they could only be returned if due honour, dignity and the security of the ashes were guaranteed," he said. "In Russia today, when the elections have brought Communists back to power, that is clearly out of the question."

Pavlova is one of the more famous people in the cemetery, close to her London home



Pavlova's urn at Golders Green

in Highgate where she lived at the end of her life. Others include Sigmund Freud and Peter Sellers. Mr Thomas, a former director of communications for the Conservative Party, said there was no reason to return the ashes either to The Netherlands or Russia. He accused Mr Thomassen of being obsessive and his crusade was "misguided".

Mr Thomassen, however,

claims Pavlova, as a Russian Orthodox believer, would never have consented to cremation. "I'm sure Anna would have returned home to Russia earlier if she had not been prevented from doing so by Dandré, who was forbidden from going back because of fraud charges there."

Pavlova, born in 1881, rapidly established herself as the most celebrated dancer of her time. Already a prima ballerina in 1906, she went to Paris on the historic tour of the Ballets Russes in 1909, and after 1913 danced independently with her own company throughout the world.

For the rest of her life, with various partners (including Laurent Novikov and Pierre Vladimirov) and companies, she was a wandering missionary for her art. Her performance is said to have left all those who saw her with a lasting memory of disciplined grace and poetic movement.

Pavlova had no children. Her home, by House in Hampstead, became famous for the ornamental lake with swans, symbolic of her most famous role, the Saint-Saëns dying swan, which she performed 4,000 times.

On her deathbed, she is reputed to have said "Prepare my swan costume", but Mr Thomassen said she really asked her maid to send back the designer dress she had recently bought in Paris and give the money to one of her orphanages.

She gave her name to pavlova, a marshmallow and meringue confection topped with whipped cream.



A 1910 portrait study of Anna Pavlova, the Russian ballerina who lived in London up to her death in 1931

EUROPEAN SUMMARY

Greek bid to put off succession

Athens: The press aide to Andreas Papandreu, the ailing Greek Socialist Prime Minister, warned Socialist deputies yesterday that attempts formally to replace him would be unconstitutional (John Carr writes).

Telemachos Hytiris, the Press Minister and a confidant of Mr Papandreu's, said: "Any decision in the Prime Minister's absence would be a deviation from lawful procedures." The statement was seen as an attempt to scotch moves to find a successor to Mr Papandreu, who has been critically ill and politically inactive for 44 days.

Several Socialist deputies yesterday called for moves to fill the power vacuum. The constitution has no rule for the present circumstances but a decision is expected after a party central committee meeting on January 20.

Polish spy claim denied

Moscow: A former Russian spy said he would bring to light secret recordings to prove Polish agents had fabricated stories alleging Poland's Prime Minister, Józef Oleksy, co-operated with the KGB.

Vladimir Alganov, a security officer at the Soviet Embassy in Warsaw in 1991-1992, said Polish agents had masterminded the charges to try to prevent Mr Oleksy gaining power. Mr Oleksy has said the allegations were based on evidence made up by embittered backers of former President Walesa. (Reuters)

Soares to give up politics

Lisbon: President Soares, Portugal's champion of democratic rule since the 1974 revolution, will leave politics when he steps down on March 8. Senior Soares, 71, head of the Socialist Party for more than a decade, has been Prime Minister three times and President twice.

Marcelo Antonio de Spínola, 85, Portugal's first President after the 1974 revolution, is in hospital with a respiratory infection. (Reuters)

New Austrian finance chief

Vienna: Franz Vranitzky, the Austrian Chancellor, named Viktor Klima as Finance Minister after the resignation of Andreas Staribacher. Herr Klima, 48, a member of the Social Democrats, was Minister for State Industry and Transport. Herr Staribacher, 38, quit after just nine months in office, saying he was disillusioned. (Reuters)

Renault boss investigated over phone taps

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS

LOUIS SCHWEITZER, the chairman of Renault, the French car manufacturer, has been placed under formal investigation for alleged involvement in a government telephone-tapping scandal. The alleged offences are said to have been committed when he was chief aide to Laurent Fabius, the former Socialist Prime Minister.

The investigation, under French laws protecting personal liberty, is the latest embarrassing chapter in a sordid saga dating back to the mid-1980s. The phones of several hundred people, including prominent political and economic figures and journalists, lawyers and artists, were allegedly bugged by the anti-

terrorist unit at the Elysée Palace between 1983 and 1989 when François Mitterrand was President. The so-called "Elysée eavesdropping affair" is just one of several damaging scandals left from the corruption-plagued Socialist presidency.

M. Schweitzer, 53, was formally placed under investigation by Judge Jean-Pierre Valat last November, but the legal inquiry was not disclosed until yesterday. A Renault spokesman said yesterday that M. Schweitzer had not yet appeared before a magistrate, but the investigation marks the first stage of a process that could result in a full-scale criminal trial. Four of M. Mitterrand's associates, in-

cluding two police officials, are already under investigation in connection with the affair.

M. Schweitzer is believed to have countersigned telephone-tapping instructions issued by Gilles Menage, one of M. Mitterrand's top aides, who went on to head EDF, the state-owned electricity company. M. Menage is also under investigation in the case, along with Christian Prouteau, the former head of the anti-terrorist unit who later co-ordinated security for the 1992 Albertville Winter Olympic Games.

Investigating magistrates have reportedly collected thousands of computerised records compiled by the anti-terrorist squad, containing detailed in-

formation on relatives and friends of those people whose telephones were tapped, including several close associates of M. Mitterrand.

If the former government officials are eventually found guilty of abusing their authority by infringing individual liberty, they could face ten-year prison sentences. A lesser charge of invasion of privacy carries a sentence of up to three years.

M. Schweitzer, the great-nephew of Nobel prize winner Albert Schweitzer, was awarded the Legion of Honour in recognition of his political work. He was M. Fabius's chief aide from 1981 until 1986 when he joined Renault, the state-owned car company.



Schweitzer: top aide in Socialist Government

Price of olive oil 'set to double'

FROM EDWARD OWEN IN MADRID

THE price of olive oil is expected to double this year as a result of one of the Mediterranean's worst droughts this century, according to figures announced yesterday by the producers' association in Spain, one of the major olive-growing regions.

Both the Spanish association, Asoliva, and the Spanish agricultural union, Asaja, are demanding an urgent subsidy from the European Union to stop the price rise and to discourage European users from switching to cheaper oils.

"The harvest is going on now and, although it is still difficult to calculate, we expect exports to be almost halved," said Juan Vicente Gómez Moya, director of Asoliva, yesterday.

He said the latest figures for exports to the United Kingdom showed that sales had already dropped 20 per cent last year because of price rises, and gave a warning that there was also a bad harvest in Italy and Greece, the other two main EU producers.

"We need immediate help from the European Union," said José Ramón Díaz, the spokesman for Asaja. "There is no European oil lake to make up the shortfall for the export market." He said that the present EU subsidies of

£1.26 per kilogram for producers and 11p per litre bottle were too little.

One reason why olive oil may not get an emergency subsidy, however, is because the Socialist Government in Madrid seems surprisingly unconcerned, even though the harvest will be down to about 275,000 tonnes compared with 480,000 tonnes last time.

"We have 150,000 tonnes in reserve," said a spokesman at the Ministry of Agriculture, "and the shortfall in olive oil for non-producing EU countries can be made up with imports from Tunisia and Turkey, since import taxes have now been reduced."

Bosnian Serbs 'abducted 17'

FROM STACY SULLIVAN IN SARAJEVO

THE Bosnian Government has said that at least 17 people have been kidnapped by the Bosnian Serbs since December 22 after being dragged from their vehicles on a road recently opened by the Nato peace implementation force (Ifor). They are said to be detained in Iliđa, a Serb-held suburb of Sarajevo.

Nato officials say that the Government's claims are unsubstantiated and that Ifor has received no formal complaint about the disappearances. Nevertheless, a Bosnian government minister said lists of the 17 people, with the dates and details of the kidnappings, were presented

to Ifor on five separate occasions, as well as an appeal to Ifor to seek their release.

In a letter dated December 29 to General Louis Zeller, the French commander of the ground forces around Sarajevo, Hasan Muratovic, a Bosnian government minister, listed three men who had been abducted, with a description and registration number of the lorry they had been driving.

Yesterday, the Government gave Ifor a list of 17 names and dates. Mr Muratovic said that he had also discussed the issue

with General Zeller's deputy on December 28 and that other government officials mentioned the abductions at joint military meetings attended by Ifor and Bosnian Serb officials. The United Nations police force, Civpol, had also sent a report to Ifor after a Bosnian government liaison officer told the agency about the disappearances.

Ifor officials have denied any knowledge about the disappearances and said that in any case such abductions are civil matters and do not come within Ifor's mandate.

More Foreign News on pages 10 & 13



Mussolini wins contest

RACHELE MUSSOLINI, a 21-year-old sociology student and granddaughter of the late dictator, poses after winning a Miss Italy beauty contest in Rome yesterday. Signorina Mussolini is the daughter of Romano Mussolini, the jazz-playing rebel son of Italo. Her half-sister Alessandra, right, unsuccessfully ran as the right-wing National Alliance candidate for mayor of Naples last year. (AP)



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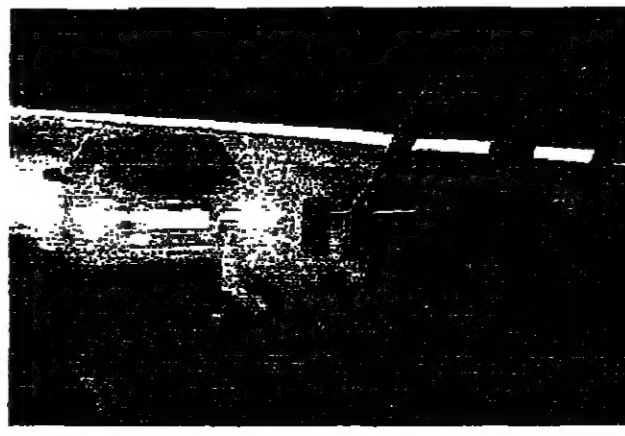
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Postcode

Telephone

Send to: RAC Rescue, FREEPOST, Bristol BS38 7AU. (No stamp needed.)

ST0004/SS1697/3/XX

مكتبات الأصل



Imperial Leather
Mild Soap £1.79
**6 BARS FOR
THE PRICE
OF 4**

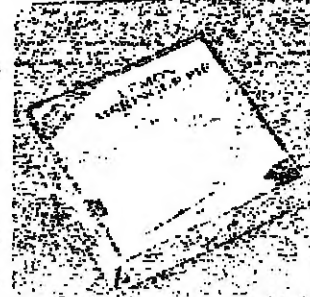
British White
Potatoes 2.5kg
£1.39 69p
HALF PRICE



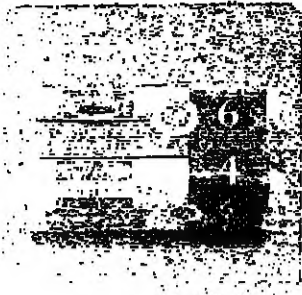
Nescafe 200g
£3.66
**BUY 2 GET
3RD FREE**



Sainsbury's
Sunflower Extra Light
79p
**BUY 1 GET
1 FREE**



Sara Lee
Lemon Meringue Pie
£1.49 99p
SAVE 50p



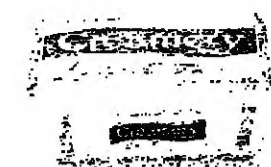
Shredded Wheat
Bitesize 750g
£2.09 £1.29
SAVE 80p



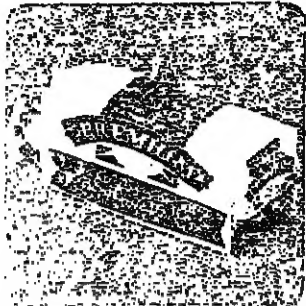
Sainsbury's
9" Cheese & Tomato
Pizza To-Go
£1.95 £1.45
SAVE 50p



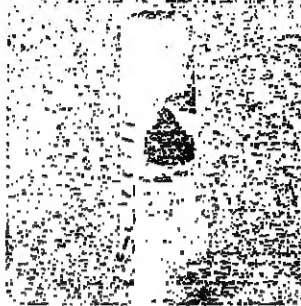
Sainsbury's
Creamery Light
200g 99p
**BUY 1 GET
1 FREE**



Philips Softone
White Light Bulbs x 3
£1.99 £1.29
SAVE 70p



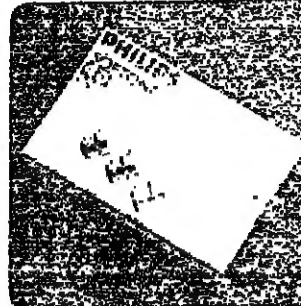
Sainsbury's
Premium White
Bread 800g 5lp
**BUY 1 GET
1 FREE**



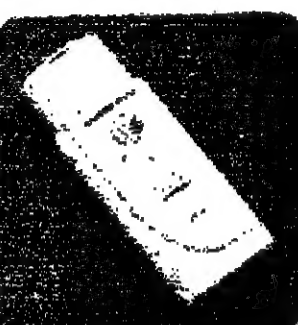
Sainsbury's Absolute
Anti-Perspirant
200ml £1.39
**BUY 1 GET
1 FREE**



Sainsbury's
Frozen Potato Waffles
99p
**BUY 1 GET
1 FREE**



Sainsbury's B5 Active
Shampoo/Conditioner
£1.49
**BUY 1 GET 2ND
HALF PRICE**



Strongbow Cider
10 x 25cl
**SPECIAL PURCHASE
£2.99**

Sainsbury's
Thick Cut Sausage
and Egg Sandwich
£1.19 69p
SAVE 50p



Heinz Tomato Soup
4 x 405g £1.23
**4 FOR THE
PRICE OF 3**



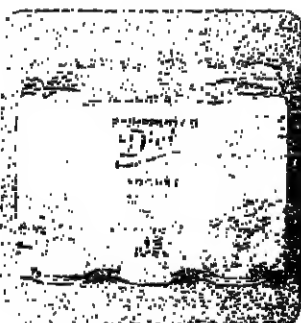
Robertson's
Strawberry Jam
340g 79p
**BUY 1 GET
1 FREE**



Sainsbury's
Sport Shower Gel
£1.19
**BUY 1 GET
1 FREE**



Sainsbury's
Diet Yogurt x 12
£3.09 £1.99
SAVE £1.10



Sainsbury's
Chocolate Digestive
400g
89p 59p
SAVE 30p



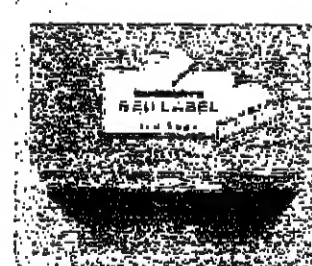
Sainsbury's
Crumpets
37p
**12 FOR THE
PRICE OF 8**



Webster's Yorkshire
Bitter 4 x 440ml
£2.49 £1.99
SAVE 50p



Sainsbury's
Red Label Teabags
160s
£1.75 £1.15
SAVE 60p



Sainsbury's
Frozen Garden Peas
907g
£1.29 99p
SAVE 30p



Müller
Corner Yogurt
37p 29p
SAVE 8p



Sainsbury's
Cheesy Feet
95p
**BUY 1 GET
1 FREE**



Sainsbury's
Foam Bath 1 litre
99p
**BUY 1 GET
1 FREE**



Hula Hoops x 10
£1.49
**BUY 1 GET
2ND HALF
PRICE**



Suffolk Choice
8 Sausages
£1.29
**BUY 2 GET
3RD FREE**



Ham on the Bone
(knuckle)
89p 59p per 100g
SAVE 30p



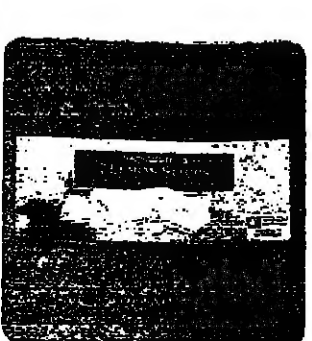
Sainsbury's
Performers Ultra Dry/
Ultra Thin £5.39
**BUY 1 GET 2ND
HALF PRICE**



Sainsbury's
Minced Beef &
Onion Pie 400g
£1.09 79p
SAVE 30p



Sainsbury's
Lemon Slices x 7
£1.02
**BUY 2
FOR £1.49**



Munch Bunch
Pot Shots x 12
£2.05 £1.69
SAVE 36p



Energizer Batteries
£2.99
**BUY 1 GET
2ND HALF
PRICE**



Split Tin
White Bread 800g
74p
**BUY 1 GET
1 FREE**

Sainsbury's
January Savers.
Savings you'll
notice at the till,
not at the table.



Harvest Grain
Brown Bread 800g
85p 55p
THIRD OFF



Cadbury's
Time Out x3 72p
**BUY 1 GET
2ND HALF
PRICE**



Sainsbury's No Added
Sugar Fruit Drinks
2x1 litre
**SPECIAL PURCHASE
£1.79**



Wall's "Too Good To
Be True" £1.89
**BUY 2 GET
3RD FREE**



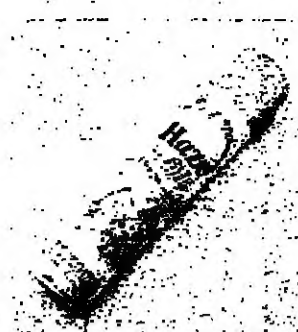
PG Tips 80s
£1.45
**BUY 2 GET
3RD FREE**



Spontex 'S' Sponge
79p
**BUY 1 GET
1 FREE**



Haze Air Freshener
300ml 89p
**BUY 1 GET
2ND HALF
PRICE**



Sainsbury's Frozen
Toad in the Hole
79p 49p
SAVE 30p



Aero Mousse x2
79p
**BUY 1 GET
1 FREE**



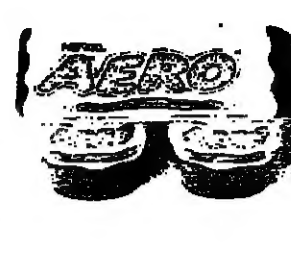
Alicante Tinto 75cl
**SPECIAL PURCHASE
£2.25**



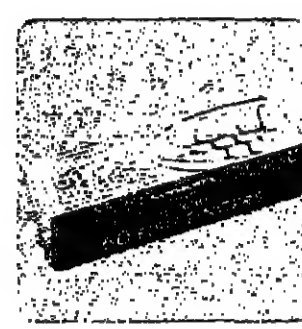
Sainsbury's Diet
Chocolate Mousse x4
£1.09
**BUY 1 GET
1 FREE**



Sainsbury's
Basmati Rice 3kg
£3.79
**3kg FOR THE
PRICE OF 2kg**



Sainsbury's
60 Fish Fingers
**SPECIAL PURCHASE
£1.89**



Sainsbury's TOPS
Standard Mouthwash
500ml £1.19
**BUY 1 GET
1 FREE**



Sainsbury's
Classic Cola
24x330ml
**SPECIAL PURCHASE
£3.99**



Sainsbury's
Low Fat Food
45p
**BUY 1 GET
1 FREE**

Sainsbury's are making things a little easier
this January. Across the month we're

introducing 200 January Savers.

They're either dramatically down in price
or multibuy that give you more for your

money. So you can afford to give

your family the best, even in January.



Sainsbury's
Cottage Cheese 454g
£1.57 99p
SAVE 58p



Kit Kat 4x4 Finger
86p
**BUY 1 GET
2ND HALF
PRICE**

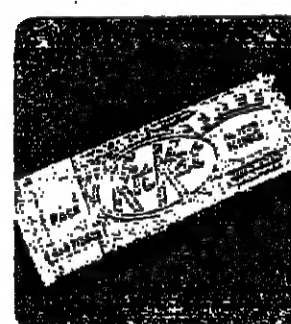


Sainsbury's
Battenberg
82p
**BUY 1 GET
1 FREE**

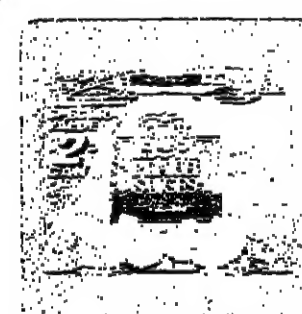


Mars/Snickers
Snacksize & Milky
Way x10 £1.57
**BUY 2 GET
3RD FREE**

Sainsbury's.
**Where good food
costs less.**



Del Monte
Peach Slices 2x415g
**SPECIAL PURCHASE
89p**



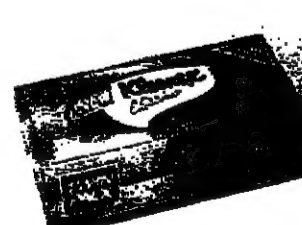
Sainsbury's
Spaghetti 2kg
**SPECIAL PURCHASE
99p**



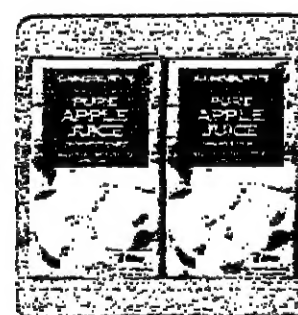
Sainsbury's
Frozen Large Chicken
2kg
£3.29 £2.29
SAVE £1



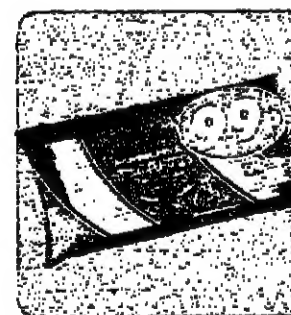
Sainsbury's
6 Cod Portions in
Crispy Breadcrumbs
£2.95 £1.95
SAVE £1



Kleenex Ultra Tissues
Mansize x2
£2.89 £1.89
SAVE £1



Sainsbury's
Pure Apple Juice
4x1 litre
£3.19 £2.39
SAVE 80p



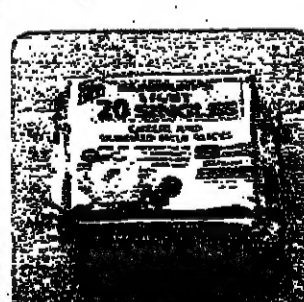
Sainsbury's
Baked Beans
6x420g
**SPECIAL PURCHASE
99p**



Sainsbury's
Niersteiner Gutes
Domtal 75cl
£2.85 £2.45
SAVE 40p



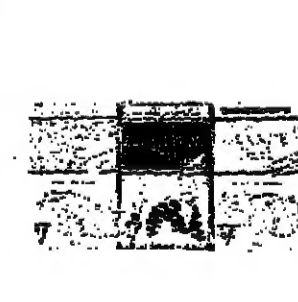
Sainsbury's Cheese
Singles Light x20
200g
£1.69 84p
HALF PRICE



Loose Rolls
16p each
**BUY 1 GET
1 FREE**



Sainsbury's
Variety Ready Drinks
27x250ml
**SPECIAL PURCHASE
£4.99**



Sainsbury's
Spaghetti 4x410g
95p 79p
SAVE 16p



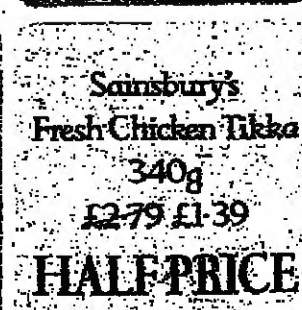
Sainsbury's
Pasta Sauce x2,
Linguine and
Free Storage Jar
**SPECIAL PURCHASE
£2.49**



Sainsbury's
Cheese and
Onion Flan
£1.49 99p
SAVE 50p



Sainsbury's
Grapefruit Segments
2x539g
**SPECIAL PURCHASE
99p**



Sainsbury's
Fresh Chicken Tikka
340g
£2.79 £1.39
HALF PRICE



Libby's
Rice Pudding
3x439g
**SPECIAL PURCHASE
99p**



Kellogg's
Rice Krispies
440g
£1.55 £1.25
SAVE 30p



Sainsbury's
Pasta Sauce x2,
Linguine and
Free Storage Jar
**SPECIAL PURCHASE
£2.49**

THE MERCHANDISE IS SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY. SOME LINES ARE AVAILABLE AT LARGER BRANCHES ONLY. THE LAW DOES NOT PERMIT THE SALE OF ALCOHOL TO PERSONS UNDER THE AGE OF 18.

مكتبة من الأمل

Brazilians find 4,000 trapped in slavery

FROM GABRIELLA GAMINI IN BAURU, SÃO PAULO STATE

MORE than 4,000 people have been found by the Brazilian authorities working in conditions of virtual slavery in five ranches just outside the small town of Bauru in São Paulo state.

Organisations representing the country's landless groups blame the situation on the Government which, they say, has done little to push through much needed land reforms. "Land is in the hands of a few powerful people and on their territory they can do as they please," Nelson Costa, a member of one of the main groups, said. "We have made international organisations aware of this situation. But as yet there has been no change."

Among the 4,000 "slaves" was Ana Maria de Almeida, who has spent most of her 14 years shackled with rusty chains to the trees in the pine plantations of southern Brazil. She has never been to school nor seen outside the wire fences that surround them.

She and her two younger brothers, who are nine and ten, are forced to work from dawn to dusk, extracting a thick, brown resin from the trees used to manufacture products such as chewing gum and glue which are exported to the United States and Europe. In return, they earn a meagre daily ration of beans and rice.

Like hundreds of other children working the ranches that lie along a railway line linking the industrial capital of São Paulo to the agriculturally rich west of the state, they are tied to the trees to prevent them from escaping. The sores on their hands and infected cuts on their legs are a result of the careless use of sulphuric acid that they spray on to diagonal cuts made in the tree trunks to activate the flow of the rubbery resin.

Ana Maria's father, João Buenos, 58, who has been left

blind from contact with the toxic material, works alongside his children in the Fazenda Divina (Divine Ranch), one of the biggest plantations on the outskirts of Bauru. Like most of the adults, he has been spared the chains and is bound to the plantation by a debt to the ranch shop, where he is forced to buy food. He said: "I will have to work 14 hours a day for the rest of my life to pay it off. There is no way out." He says he was sold to a landlord to work as a resin extractor when he was nine.

The five ranches were raided last month by government inspectors after receiving complaints from human rights groups and one man has been arrested, accused of being the slave vendor in the region. They said that more than half of those who were found working in terrible conditions were under 14.

The names of the landowners who profited from the use of slave labour have been kept secret, and those forced to work on the ranches have not been freed. "We have reported the slavery to the central Government and highlighted how children are being kept in atrocious conditions to extract pine resin," said Silvio Carlos Lima Pereira, a government representative in the town of Bauru. "But local landowners have a lot of economic power and it has been impossible to change the condition of the people involved."

The existence of slavery in Brazil more than 100 years after it was abolished officially in 1888 has been long known. However, the discovery of slaves in the rich south has shocked many. "This is an embarrassing sign that we still live in the dark ages, even in the modernised part of our country," said Renato Simoes, president of the Human Rights Commission of the São Paulo legislative assembly.



Peter Bleach, a Briton, is escorted from a court in Puruliya, West Bengal, after being remanded in custody on Monday for a week. He and five Latvians were arrested by the Indian authorities on suspicion that an aircraft they were flying had

Briton in court over 'arms drop'

dropped weapons including assault rifles and rocket-launchers into a rural area near the border with Bangladesh. They were detained by the police after two Indian jet fighters forced their Russian-built cargo aircraft to land in Bombay on December 22. The police said the aircraft belonged to the Hong Kong-based Carol Airlines, owned by Kim Peter Davy, a New Zealander, who is alleged to have fled after the plane landed. The Puruliya court also remanded the Latvian crew in custody. (AP)

Black Watch denies inquiry allegations over triad links

FROM JONATHAN BRAUDE IN HONG KONG

THE British garrison headquarters in Hong Kong last night strongly denied a local newspaper story alleging investigations into links between Black Watch servicemen and the colony's notorious triad gangs.

The garrison statement, issued only after the story was quoted in *The Times* yesterday, said the Royal Hong Kong Police and the Independent Commission Against Corruption (Icac) had confirmed that there were no investigations into links between soldiers and organised crime syndicates.

Kieron Flynn, the journalist who wrote the original article, stood by the story, however. He said the *Eastern Express* newspaper had "no problems" with the story, which said at least 12 soldiers had become full members of the Sun Yee On triad after moonlighting as bouncers in Hong Kong bars.

The article claimed that they had been brought back to the colony for interviews and had

been given guarantees that they would not be prosecuted. The garrison statement said no soldiers from the Black Watch had been brought back for that or any other investigation and "no certificate of immunity from prosecution has been issued to any member of the Black Watch... by the police, who have no right to do so. We have today confirmed that the Director of Public Prosecutions, who does have this power, has also not issued any such certificate of immunity."

The garrison also attacked the *Eastern Express* for failing to print its statement that it had no knowledge of such an investigation, no records of any request for assistance by the police and no evidence of any servicemen being returned to Hong Kong for investigation.

The *Times* yesterday reported a similar statement from the garrison, but also quoted a spokesman saying: "I can't give you a categorical denial."

So far, neither the police nor the garrison has denied, or formally addressed, the assertion that Black Watch soldiers had joined the Sun Yee On triad.

Colony's young 'want to leave'

FROM JONATHAN MIRSKY IN HONG KONG

MORE than 40 per cent of Hong Kong's young would like to leave the colony before the Chinese takeover in 1997, according to an opinion poll.

They said they would go abroad if they could because of China's threat to freedom and human rights after the transfer of sovereignty. They were also concerned about corruption, crime, and the difficulty of getting a job.

The poll, of 1,660 people between the ages of 15 and 24, was conducted by the University of Hong Kong's Institute of Pacific Studies and one of the district boards, a local authority. The organiser, Dr Timothy Wong, said that young people who know about political conditions in China from what they read in the press, were asking themselves if the same conditions would develop in Hong Kong after 1997.

Dr Wong painted a picture of cynical Hong Kong young people who feel politically helpless and distrust the Civil Service. Almost a quarter are unaware that they have the right to vote.

World conflicts on increase, says US pro-military lobby

BY EVE-ANN PRENTICE AND OUR FOREIGN STAFF

THE world suffered a record 71 conflicts last year, according to an American group that opposes military spending cuts in the United States.

The tally, one more than in 1994, was double the number logged by the National Defence Council Foundation in 1989, the year the Berlin Wall came down. The foundation lists any country where turmoil has disrupted economies, politics or security.

Andrew Messing, the foundation's executive director, said that despite progress towards peace last year in the Middle East, Ireland and the former Yugoslavia, "we're having a problem generating peace worldwide."

The main dangers emerging in the post-Cold War era were nuclear and biological weapons proliferation, the growing militarisation of China, and violence related to drug trafficking.

The foundation's listing includes bloodshed from Afghanistan to Yemen and in countries as diverse as the Comoros, near Madagascar, which suffered an attempted coup, and the United States, included because of drug violence and organised crime.

Mark Mansfield, a spokesman for the CIA, said the agency had counted 27 conflicts during the year. Last spring, the Washington-based Centre for Defence Information, a liberal-leaning research group, found 20 active wars and a dozen less intense or latent conflicts.

In Britain, Professor Alexander Kennaway, senior lecturer at the Conflict Studies Research Centre at Sandhurst, said: "Did you ever believe that the Warsaw Pact was going to attack Nato, or vice versa? I didn't, and I think the world is a more dangerous place now because of the absence of coherent policy in the former Soviet Union."

Countries that were added to the foundation's list of conflict areas last year were Bangladesh, the Comoros, Djibouti, France, Ghana, Libya, Mali, Niger, Papua New Guinea, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, and Spain.

Countries dropped from the list were the Bahamas, Belize and Costa Rica; Ireland and Britain, because of the reduced threat from Irish terrorism; and Mozambique, Malawi, and Turkmenistan, with less political violence.

Hope for peace in custody battles

FROM AGENCE FRANCE-PRESS IN SYDNEY

WITH a rising divorce rate and acrimonious custody disputes clogging its courts, Australia has a possible solution to the problem of couples squabbling over parental access visits: exchange centres.

An \$A5 million (£2.4 million) network of nine centres was announced last week by Michael Lavarch, the Attorney-General, who said they would seek to "reduce the risks of violence and minimise emotional trauma" for the children as well as the parents.

The move follows community discussion and research into what the courts call "complex contact cases" of intractable dispute between parents.

The centres were recommended as a possible remedy in a report last April by the Australian Law Reform Commission. Michael Ryland, the commissioner, said that it was very important to make sure there were mechanisms to deal with conflict between separated parents, and the centres served this role.

"In many cases, every time a parent turns up for access to the children, huge and horrendous fights erupt and after a few months of this, inevitably a parent returns to the courts and applies to change the custody order," he said. The centres would take custody out of an environment that was prone to dispute.

Mr Lavarch said that in most cases, separated parents were able to put their differences aside for their children's benefit. "But there are a proportion of cases where access is often denied," he said.

Sometimes the custodial parent was fearful for his or her own safety. In other cases, the relationship between the parents was so bad that it hindered the children's right to have access to both parents.

Welfare officials were also concerned that some changes were happening in unsuitable places ranging from the steps of police stations to car parks of fast-food restaurants.

"Now that isn't the best sort of atmosphere for children, and the idea behind these centres is to take it out of that sort of atmosphere and into a safe and secure atmosphere," Mr Lavarch said.

The centres will have separate entrances so that parents would not have to see or speak to each other at all during the exchange.

"In some cases, where a poor relationship between the parents makes any contact very difficult, these services will allow the children to continue contact with both parents," Mr Lavarch said.

Mr Ryland said that the commission had looked at the extreme 1 per cent of custody cases. "A couple can appear in court more than 20 times over a single application... it shows something is not working in the way the family court is dealing with these cases."

Germ war on toads

A VIRUS from Venezuela is being tested by Australian scientists as a new weapon against the horde of cane toads spreading across the country (Nick Nuttall writes).

The giant poisonous toads, brought into Australia in the 1930s to munch their way through sugar cane bugs and pests, have become a scourge. Scientists fear the creatures are threatening native wildlife. The toads, which now

number several million, have also attacked and eaten cats and dogs. They can kill a pet in 30 seconds by squirting it with a poisonous liquid.

Attempts to kill off the species proved futile, but the discovery of a virus-like disease called iridio in South America has given scientists hope. It is being tested at the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation in Sydney.

American diners toy with butterflies in the stomach

FROM JAMES BONE IN NEW YORK

THERE may soon come a day in America when having a fly in your soup is a cause not for complaint but for celebration.

Entomologists and farmers specialising in what is known as "micro-livestock" are striving to convince Americans that insects such as grasshoppers and termites make a tasty, protein-rich source of food. Customers cannot yet pick up a serving of deep-fried ant larvae or mashed grubs with their hamburger at the local fast-food joint, but they can now buy a variety of insect snacks.

David Fluker, a Louisiana farmer who supplies insects to zoos and pet shops, recently started marketing freeze-dried, oven-roasted crickets dipped in chocolate or covered in spicy Cajun sauce for \$1.89 (£1.20) a packet.

Asian groceries are meanwhile stocking exotic specialties such as canned silkworm pupae fried with onion and spices, and giant waterbugs. The trend is catching. Several insect cookbooks have been published, including *Butterflies in My Stomach*, *Unconventional Cuisine and Entertaining with Insects*, which is about to go into its third edition. A quarterly *Food Insects Newsletter*, produced

sity of Wisconsin, now claims a circulation of 2,000 for its recipes for caterpillar crunch, sautéed giant ants and waxworm fritters that explode like popcorn when dropped in hot oil.

Although insects are widely eaten in Asia, Africa and Latin America, Americans



Tasty bites: caterpillars, crickets and cicadas are a new food trend

brought from England. On landing in New England, they refused even to eat the plentiful local lobsters, she says, because they had eight legs and were considered insects.

The cause got an unexpected boost this year, however, when Scott O'Grady, the US Air Force pilot, was shot down over Bosnia-Herzegovina and survived for days on insects.

Grubco Inc, an Ohio firm that grows moth and beetle larvae, reported a sharp increase in public enquiries about eating insects. Dale Cochran, the company president, says, however, that the demand for edible insects is largely limited to dinners thrown by entomological societies.

Insect harvesting is best done by professionals. Of the million known insect species, only about 1,000 are suitable for human consumption. As a rough rule, humans should avoid colourful bugs, which tend to contain toxins or taste bad.

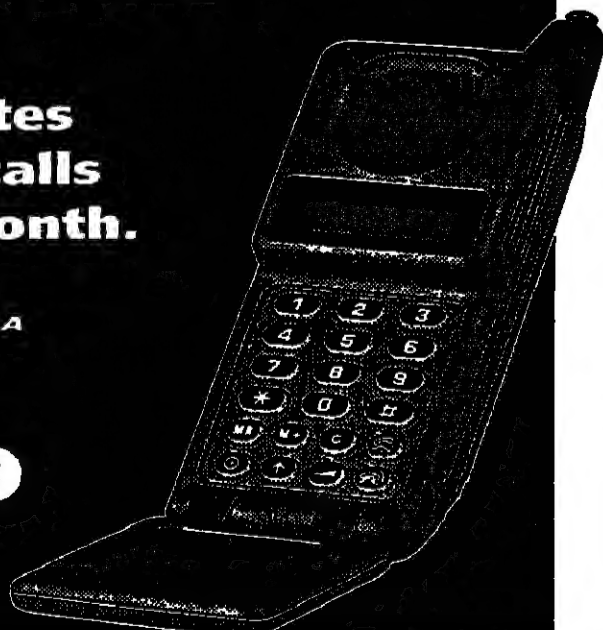
Experts offer these other tips: hairy caterpillars should be turned inside out and gutted; termites should be killed by biting down on their head; cicadas should be skewered length-wise and soaked overnight in salt water; palm

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£25,000 - £49,999	4.500%	4.59%	3.38%
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£2,000 - £9,999	3.125%	3.16%	2.34%
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£50,000 - £99,999	2.750%	2.78%	2.06%
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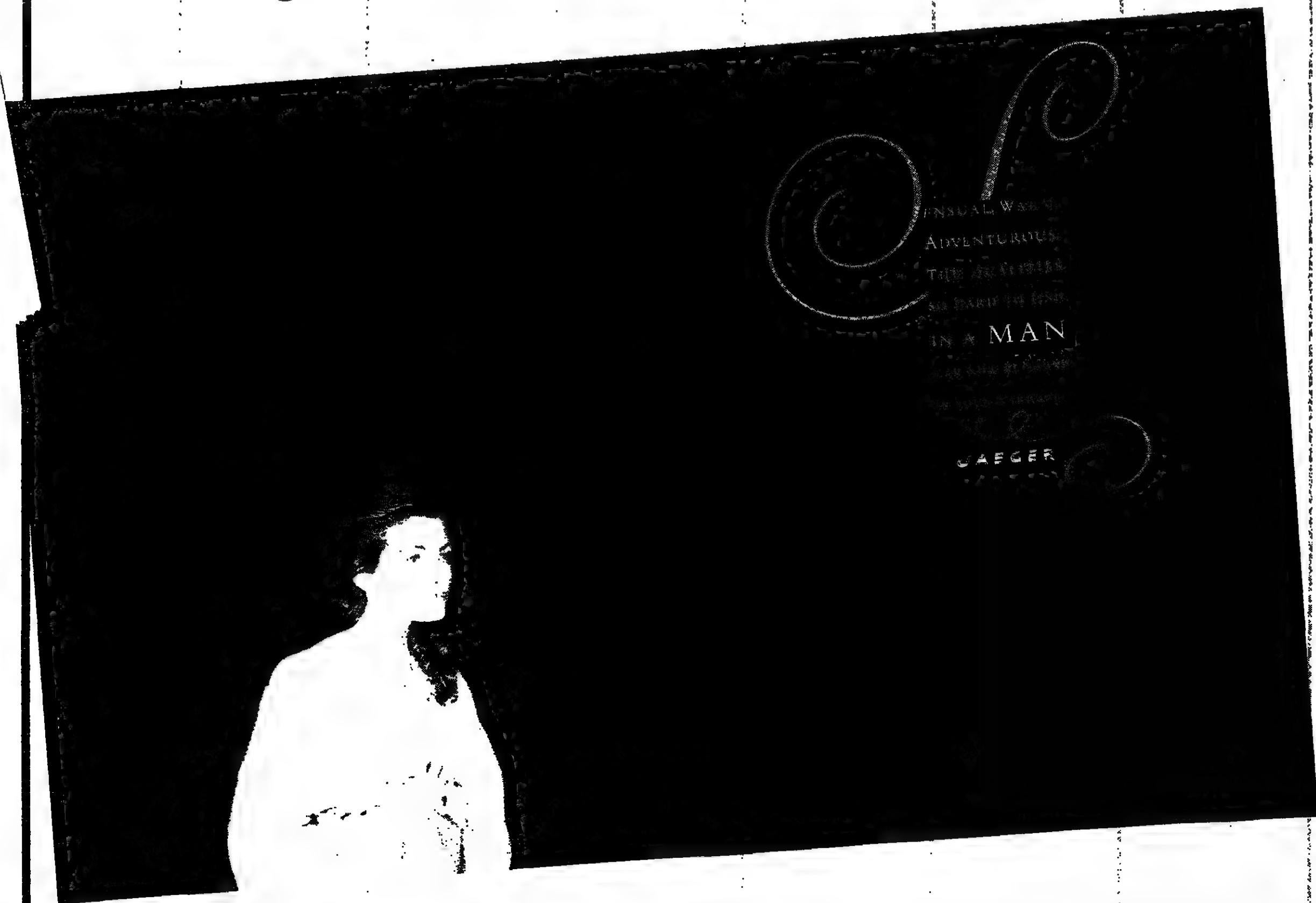
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مركز امن الاصل

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Middle East
mutiny

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may balks at
soaring pay

'Islamic fundamentalism thrives in the poorest areas and feeds on deprivation'

Middle East threatened with 'mutiny and revolt'

A LEADING Arab intellectual has delivered a warning that, despite Israel-Arab peace moves, the Middle East faces an explosion of social and economic discontent.

Mohamed Heikal, who advised both President Nasser and President Sadat of Egypt, and is a former editor of the Cairo daily *al-Ahram*, said the Middle East could "explode in mutiny and revolt... All the elements of a storm are gathering."

Mr Heikal was briefly imprisoned by Sadat for his criticism of Egyptian policy after the 1973 Middle East War, and later caused controversy with his 1992 book *Illusions of Triumph*, in which he argued that the Allied victory over Iraq in the Gulf War would exacerbate tensions between the West and the Arab world in the long run.

In his latest polemic, *Secret Channels*, he argues that the Israeli-Palestinian accords amount to an "unjust peace" comparable with Versailles after the First World War. "Every Middle East initiative has been based on funding a war for the Arabs to surrender with a figleaf of dignity," Mr Heikal said in an interview.

"The peace of Oslo maximised Israeli gains. The Palestinians did not get an independent



Arab leaders have failed to solve the economic and social tensions in their own countries, a leading Egyptian author tells Richard Owen

state, nor did they get any control over Jerusalem. I do not think the deal will survive for long."

The danger to Middle East stability stems mainly, Mr Heikal argues, from the failure of Arab leaders to solve economic and social tensions in their own countries. "The rulers of the Arab world have all been in power too long," he said. "The youngest of them — Colonel Muammar Gaddafi of Libya — has been at the helm for 26 years. Yet 60 per cent of the Arab population is below the age of 18. So here you have an explosive mix: permanence of power at the top, and social and economic turbulence underneath."

Mr Heikal pointed to Saudi Arabia, where the stroke suffered by King Fahd a month ago led this week to a "temporary" transfer of power to his half-brother, Crown Prince Abdullah. The real threat to the King, he said, stemmed not from Islamic extremists but from the growing middle class, which was created by

Saudi wealth and now resents the all-pervasive control of the Royal Family. "They want a share of power, and do not accept the monopoly of all wealth and political decisions by the House of Saud."

He also singled out Egypt, where there are nearly two million unemployed graduates, some of whom turn to radical Islam. "It is no accident that Islamic fundamentalism thrives in the poorest areas, and feeds on deprivation," Mr Heikal said. "If you are a young Arab, if you become educated, return to your village and find no work, naturally you become radical. In the past you might have become a communist: nowadays you become an Islamic fundamentalist."

The answer, Mr Heikal said, lay in economic reform, which would give Arabs back their pride and identity and so undercut the appeal of radical Islam. "Once we had Egyptian leadership and Gulf money, now we have neither. Before the Gulf War there was at

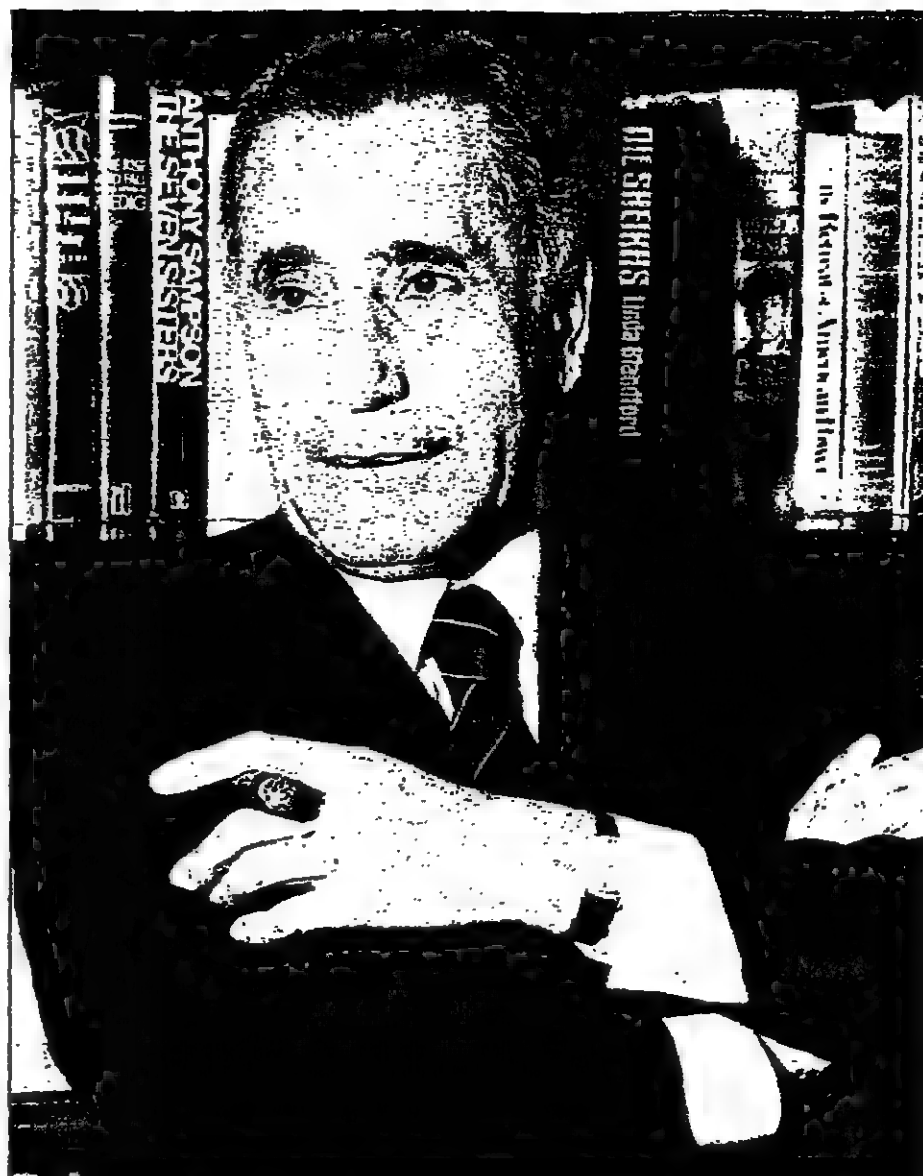
least the semblance of Arab unity, of Arab nationalism. Now even that is gone. There is a dearth of ideas."

Some Arab leaders have tried to meet the Islamic challenge on its own ground. "One-third of Egyptian TV programmes are now religious. But you cannot fight the sheikhs this way: they will always win. They know better than the people on television. All you do is to create an atmosphere in which they advance further."

Anti-Islamic propaganda is ineffective, and police crackdowns have only limited impact, "because what we are witnessing is not really a religious revolt at all, but a social and economic one. Arab leaders must tackle the sources of poverty on which fundamentalism feeds."

Western democracy was not the answer, he said — or, rather, empty imitations of Western institutions like the rubber-stamp Saudi "Consultative Council". "As far as I know it has met twice. It was done to satisfy the West that Saudi Arabia was reforming democratically. Democracy in the British or European sense is a luxury for us Arabs."

Secret Channels by Mohamed Heikal is published on January 8 by HarperCollins at £25.



Mohamed Heikal, the writer, who predicts the Middle East could explode

Saudi change raises doubts over Western arms contracts

BY MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

THE change at the top of the Saudi ruling family, with King Fahd taking a back seat after 13 years, will create new uncertainties over the defence and security relationship forged with the West before the 1991 Gulf War.

Large Western arms contracts, particularly with the United States, Britain and France, lie at the heart of the relationship. The Saudi Royal Family

despite stiff competition from America, as a result of hard-sell tactics, long-standing contacts and a personal rapport with King Fahd. Baroness Thatcher, when she was Prime Minister, John Major, and a queue of senior Cabinet ministers have visited King Fahd over the past ten years to keep the arms export agreement on course.

The importance of the relationship with King Fahd cannot be underestimated. After the Gulf War, Saudi Arabia was anxious to avoid becoming a permanent base for

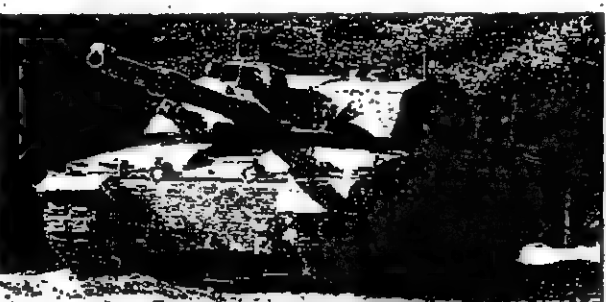
Western ground forces, despite pressure from the Allies. It took a personal telephone call from Mr Major to King Fahd to persuade the Saudi monarch to allow six RAF Tornados to remain based at Dhahran as part of the combat air patrol of Iraq south of the 32nd parallel.

It will be some time before Britain and other countries dependent on Saudi Arabia for arms exports can enjoy the same close personal relations with Crown Prince Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz, who is said to be less pro-Western than King

Fahd. The Al-Yamamah agreements were based on a firm understanding between Britain and Saudi Arabia. As one defence industry source said: "Al-Yamamah will continue for as long as there is that understanding between the two governments."

With British Aerospace as the prime contractor, present orders involve Tornados, three minisweepers being built by Vespene Thornycroft, SS9m artillery shells and Pilatus trainer aircraft.

Al-Yamamah and the contracts won by America and France (mostly warships), have survived despite Saudi budget cuts after pressure on the kingdom's economy. Some items from Al-Yamamah 2 have not yet materialised, including a possible order for combat helicopters from Westland, and more minisweepers. There are also hopes for a sale of British Challenger 2 tanks and Warrior armoured fighting vehicles, although 315 US Abrams M1A2 tanks are on order.



Britain hopes to sell Challenger 2 tanks to Saudi Arabia

US calm over Fahd handover

FROM MARTIN FLETCHER IN WASHINGTON

THE transfer of power from King Fahd to Crown Prince Abdullah caused faint apprehension in Washington yesterday. King Fahd has always been a strong and reliable American ally, as he proved during the Gulf War, but the Crown Prince is believed to be more conservative and more of an Arab nationalist.

The White House said yesterday that it saw "nothing startling" in his elevation. Other experts said the same small group of Saudi royals would continue to make the decisions and predicted no dramatic changes of policy, but America does have important interests at stake.

Saudi Arabia is the world's largest oil exporter and America's main supplier, and there is some concern that the Crown Prince could cut production to raise prices. Shibley Telhami, a Middle East expert at Cornell University, said yesterday, however, that "market considerations are going to be dominant".

Husain to honour Rabin in Tel Aviv

BY MICHAEL BINYON, DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

KING HUSAIN of Jordan, whose funeral tribute to Yitzhak Rabin was considered among the most moving, will open a trauma unit next week named after the late Israeli Prime Minister at the Tel Aviv hospital where he died.

The symbolic gesture will be the highpoint of the King's first official visit to Israel, which will set a formal seal on his country's peace treaty with its neighbour signed in 1994. A planned visit last year was postponed by the Rabin assassination but the King led the mourners at the state funeral.

The King will underline his respect for the late Israeli leader when he visits the square where Rabin was shot. In his funeral oration, he referred to Rabin as a "brother" — a phrase that moved many Israelis, but which raised hackles among many Arabs.

His gesture in opening the new hospital unit is a defiant rebuttal to Jordanian critics of the peace agreement. The King will go on to Galilee in northern Israel to the site where the peace treaty

was negotiated to present with Shimon Peres, the Israeli Prime Minister, peace medals to the two chief negotiators — Faysal Tarawneh, now Jordan's Ambassador in Washington, and Eliakim Rubenstein, Israel's representative.

Tel Aviv will be virtually sealed during the brief visit, with high-level security. The King will return to Jordan the same day.

Ehud Barak, the Israeli Foreign Minister, arrived in Amman yesterday to plan the King's visit next Wednesday and review progress on implementing the peace treaty. He and the King announced after talks that the two countries would sign all remaining agreements to normalise relations and cultural links.

"Before the end of the month, we will sign five bilateral accords covering telecommunications, a common airport at Aqaba-Eilat on the Red Sea, science and technology, transport and maritime boundaries," said Abdul Karim al-Kabari, the Jordanian Foreign Minister.

Egyptian Cabinet resigns

Cairo: Ataf Sedki, the Prime Minister of Egypt, and his Cabinet resigned yesterday after nine years in office, the official *Mena* news agency said.

Kamal el-Ganzoury, 62, the Deputy Prime Minister, said he had been asked by President Mubarak to form a new government. The action came less than a month after Egyptians chose a new parliament in elections that were criticised as rife with fraud. The Cabinet's decision to resign was made at a half-hour emergency session. The last big reshuffle was in October 1993.

The move came as a surprise because President Mubarak said after the elections that he saw no need for big Cabinet changes. (AP/AFI)

Banned skater marries again

Los Angeles: Tonya Harding, whose first husband helped to destroy her figure-skating career two years ago, has remarried (Giles Whittell writes). Ms Harding was banned for life from competitions after her chief rival, Nancy Kerrigan, was attacked on the eve of the US national figure-skating championships in 1994. Picture rights to her wedding to Michael Smith were sold for £6,600.

First meal for Seoul protester

Seoul: Chun Doo Hwan, the jailed former South Korean President, ate his first solid meal — boiled mushrooms, shredded beef in soy sauce, and rice porridge — after ending his three-week hunger strike to protest his innocence on charges of masterminding the 1979 military coup. Prosecutors have resumed questioning him in hospital. (AFP)

Indonesia hit by tidal wave

Pale: Indonesian police said that at least eight people had been killed by a tidal wave after an earthquake measuring 7.0 on the Richter scale hit Indonesia's Sulawesi island on New Year's Day. Officials said that at least 384 buildings had been damaged by the quake. (Reuters)

Bridal suite

Taipei: A couple in Taiwan are to marry in a £640,000 public bathroom they built themselves. Five other couples will marry in the bathroom, lavishly decorated and located in a park in central Taiwan, on January 14. (Reuters)

Hamas withdrawal undermines Palestinian poll

FROM ROSS DUNN IN JERUSALEM

THREE Islamists, the only real opposition to Yasser Arafat, the PLO chairman, suddenly withdrew from the first Palestinian elections yesterday, throwing the credibility of the contest further into doubt.

Their decision is certain further to hamper international public perception of the elections and of Mr Arafat, who was last week accused of manipulating the process after his security officials jailed a Palestinian newspaper editor for five days for failing to put a story praising him on the front page. News of the

withdrawal of the Islamists coincided with the announcement by the Palestinian Central Election Commission yesterday that the campaign for the January 20 poll is now officially under way. The date had been brought forward but, after criticism by European Union and other international election monitors that the campaigning period was not long enough, it has again been put back.

Ghassan Khatib, publisher of the *Palestine Report* and a respected commentator, spoke out strongly yesterday against the Palestinian Authority's constant breaching of its own election laws. "The party in power (the PLO) is manipulating...

the election procedures to suit its political needs," he said. He said the authority had extended the date for registration to allow the entry of three independent candidates who had strong ties to Hamas, the Islamic Resistance Movement. Now the same candidates had announced that they would not be standing despite the bending of the rules to accommodate them.

Their withdrawal from the contest means that at least 30 per cent of all Palestinians in the Gaza Strip who are estimated to support Hamas have lost the chance to elect strong candidates to represent their views. In a statement issued yesterday,

Issam Haniya, Khalid al-Hindi and Zaid al-Namrouqi said they had withdrawn their nominations because of deep divisions among hardline Muslims over whether any of their number should give legitimacy to the elections. The armed wing of Hamas is strongly opposed to the peace process with Israel, and has claimed responsibility for many of the suicide bombing attacks that have killed more than 100 Israelis in the past two years.

Mr Khatib, who met Mr Arafat last week, said yesterday that the membership of the Central Election Commission was itself a breach of the electoral laws. "According to the

text of the law, it should be composed of independent, neutral judges and high academics but in practice it is headed by a Fatah personality... and there are another three pure Fatah members on the commission, which is in breach of the law."

Mr Khatib said, however, that there was also a positive side to the elections. "In the short term they will strengthen the position of Mr Arafat, but in the long term they are an educational process and should end up improving the sense of democracy. They will gradually create a system of accountability and transparency leading to efficiency in the political structure," he said.

Broadway balks at stars' soaring pay

FROM JAMES BONE IN NEW YORK

THE last time Julie Andrews appeared on Broadway 30 years ago, she got \$1,250 (\$800) a week to star in *My Fair Lady*. Now playing on the Great White Way once again in *Victor/Victoria*, she pulls in \$50,000 a week plus profit-sharing.

The surge in star salaries has caused grumbles of discontent among Broadway producers. Leading actors and actresses are demanding Hollywood-size salaries to pull in the crowds.

Andrews's show, a stage version of her role as a female impersonator in the 1982 film by her director-husband, Blake Edwards, cost \$8.5 million to put on. *Victor/Victoria* was panned by the critics but plays to full houses on the strength of her name, despite a minimum ticket price of \$55.

By the time she collects her 10 per cent of the weekly gross of more than \$600,000, Andrews can comfortably earn

\$72,000 a week and still look forward to 5 per cent of the show's net profits. The pattern is repeated across Broadway, as costly musicals come to dominate and traditional plays by such names as Neil Simon, Tom Stoppard and David Mamet flee to cheaper venues.

Carol Channing reportedly makes \$55,000 a week to star in *Hello, Dolly!*, and Matthew Broderick gets \$15,000 a week plus 5 per cent of profits for his role in — what else — *How to Succeed in Business*. The only producer who has managed to buck the trend is the newly knighted Cameron Mackintosh, who stages hits like *Cats*, *Les Miserables* and *The Phantom of the Opera* that depend more on their plot and popular songs than on their stars.

The going rate for playing the *Phantom* on Broadway is just \$5,000 a week, with no perks or percentages.



Julie Andrews in the film version of *Victor/Victoria*. On Broadway the role is earning her \$72,000 a week

Caribbean island ends volcano alert

FROM REUTER IN PLYMOUTH, MONTERRAT

THOUSANDS of residents of this British territory returned home yesterday as the threat from the Caribbean island's rumbling volcano eased enough to end a month-long evacuation order, the authorities said.

"Volcanic activity is now at a level which the scientists believe offers no immediate cause for concern," said Frank Savage, Governor of Montserrat, in a New Year's Day address to the island.

More than a third of Montserrat's 11,000 people, including residents of the capital, Plymouth, had been living away from their homes since the beginning of December. At the time, scientists said that the rise of magma within the island's Peak volcano threatened the southern part of the tiny island with a deadly lava flow.

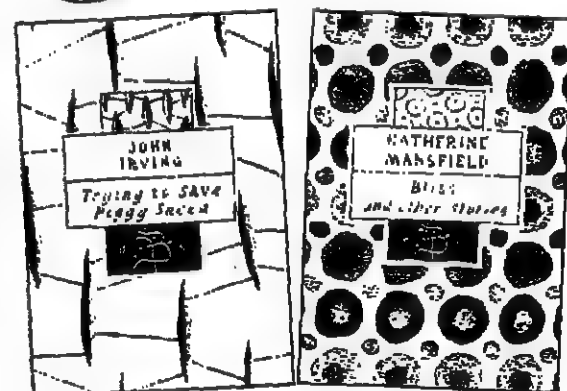
The volcano in Montserrat's Soufriere Hills burst into life last July, spewing ash and

rock after being largely inactive for more than 100 years. Continued activity after that explosion prompted an evacuation of the southern portion of the island in August. That relocation ended after two weeks when the volcano again became quiet. In November the activity began again.

The latest relocation order was lifted five days after a scientific review of the volcano showed that its activity had stabilised. The continued quiet prompted Montserrat's Government to lift the relocation order for all of the island except for a small section about a mile and a half from the volcano.

□ Moscow: The Karymsky volcano erupted in Russia's Far Eastern Kamchatka peninsula yesterday after a powerful earthquake. Media reports said it was spewing hot ash four miles into the air. The nearest town is about 30 miles away.

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THE TIMES
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Thinking thin for spring



With temperatures recently at an all-time low, it may seem odd to be looking at the new season's styles. But rather like the holiday industry, the fashion business functions with its finger permanently on the fast-forward button.

The Times asked leading names in the fashion world to gaze into the near future to foretell what looks will be hot and what the must-have items will be this year.

The overall mood appears to be pared-down and pin-thin. Silhouettes stay close to the body, and superfluous detail is dispensed with. The accent is on shape, colour and fabric: black and white offset with sharp citrus hues (lime green, lemon yellow, orange) or any

shade of blue from sky to midnight. Pattern is, once again, big news.

Man: Jersey makes a comeback, as does shantung. Both were favorites in the 1970s. Nylon and polyester are now elevated to the high-fashion catwalk as designers take inspiration from the dowdy and downtrodden — also known as "trailer-park chic".

The clever designers have simply refocused their vision by re-evaluating and repackaging the classics. They offer a wardrobe which is both comfortable and easy, certainly something to look forward to.

DONNA KARAN
Fashion designer
Hot new looks: body-slung,
bias-cut hipster pants and
skirts (any length — it's up to

the woman who wears them; midriff shells (button-back, sleeveless tops revealing the midriff); leather pieces; colourful new fabrics — stretch synthetics, glazed linen, shantung and stretch jersey.

Personal must-have items: a white leather jacket or coat, bias-cut trousers, jersey shirt and skirt, kaftan tunic, cashmere sweaters, a citrus, double-faced clutch coat, and an evening wrap.

ALEXANDRA SHULMAN
Editor, *Vogue*
This spring's fashion must-have will be the button-through dress which can be worn a million ways and found everywhere, from international designers to the high street. The low-heeled Gucci slingback is winning, too.

FLORENCE TORRENS
PFI, Russell & Bromley
The new flat shoe is a must for 1996: wearable and utterly modern. Square-cut with a low block heel, it is the wear-anywhere pump. Toe thongs are the summer sandals, always square cut & block heeled. They put toes on display with the newest colour for nails: white. The shoulder-bag makes a comeback. Best are slim shapes with "mid"-length straps designed to fit neatly under the arm. Anything in citrus brights.

BETTY JACKSON
Fashion designer
What will make headlines in 1996? The return of the long skirt — and new, modern fabrics. What new looks will be hot in the new year? Simple, streamlined shapes with minimal details, monotone and bold blocks of colour, flat sandals. Must-have items: wrap sunglasses and the streamlined zip windcheater jacket.

GIANNI VERSACE
Fashion designer
Revitalised classics. Long forgotten garments such as the shirtwaister can be reclaimed with a new attitude and earn their place of honour in women's wardrobes both for day and evening wear. Black and white are the indisputable stars with flashes of bold, almost fluorescent colours. Fabrics will be light, diaphanous, transparent and feminine to emphasise this "soft and light" style.

**Fashion
journalist of
the year**



IAIN R. WEBB

Shape of things to come: **DONNA KARAN**, centre, offers an evening wrap which is simply gorgeous. Karan has pared down her summer collection into elemental essentials.

RALPH LAUREN, left, steals the show with his shantung silk shirtwaister dress. The button-through dress is this season's must-have and will be available at every price

JIL SANDER, right, makes glamorous basics the basis for this summer's wardrobe

Photographs by
CHRIS MOORE

shirtwaister. All these items make up the two newest directional fashion looks: suburban couture and 1970s housewife chic.

KARL LAGERFELD
Fashion designer
Colour is back and minimalism will lead to boredom in the end. For the rest, let's wait for the collections.

GLENDIA BAILEY
Editor, *Martie Claire*
Anything in shantung, especially Ralph Lauren's shirt-dress in blue or dark oyster. Whistles has done a more affordable version.

PAUL FRITH
Fashion designer
Headlines: showgirls and strippers in sequins and beads, pearls and boas with sassy slingshots. Think Vegas and motels, sleazy neon and glitz. Taffeta for day. Polyester for evening. Must-haves: a lime satin, puff-sleeve shirt-dress, a fawn knee-length pencil skirt worn with a cashmere sleeveless top.

LISA ARMSTRONG
Associate editor, *Vogue*
The news now is in cult items — as opposed to entire looks — that will update existing clothes in your wardrobe: the Gucci silver G hipster belt, the short-strap, U-shaped bag, the flat flim-flam.

GIANFRANCO FERRÉ
Fashion designer
Intentionally I fine-tuned my fashion vision even further this season, choosing to eliminate all overlapping, encumbering elements. For daytime: a black stretch suit, a jacket that naturally defines the body, tapered pants or long skirt. For evening: essential turries in essential colours (white, blue and red) made glamorous by embroideries and sequin vailettes.

CLEMENTS RIBEIRO
Fashion design team
Headlines: bold use of prints, clashing florals, stripes and checks. Off-the-wall prints which look like 1950s-1970s wallpaper designs. Synthetic chic: the gentrification of polyester and nylon. Must-haves: striped cashmere twinset, suit with a shirt which doubles as a jacket, diagonal check skirt and stretch cashmere mismatching top, floral print

GUCCI, left, has accessories to die for — the hipster belt, the sandal and shoulder bag. Centre, **CALVIN KLEIN**'s bold black and white silhouettes. Right, **BETTY JACKSON**'s streamlined jacket.

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Ireland's ceasefire is over

The IRA is killing more people than before, says Kevin Myers

Let us go carefully again over the words issued at midnight on August 31, 1994. "Recognising the potential of the current situation and in order to enhance the democratic peace process and underline our definitive commitment to its success the leadership of Ogluigh na hEireann [the IRA] have decided that as of midnight, Wednesday 31 August, there will be a complete cessation of military operations. All our military units have been instructed accordingly."

Because the IRA did not use the word "permanent", Unionists complained that "complete" was inadequate. Not at all, both Martin McGuinness and Gerry Adams of Sinn Féin-IRA repeatedly assured everybody. Complete was good enough — complete in all its meanings.

Last year, the SDLP leader John Hume, who had done much to promote the ceasefire, exasperatedly told a television interviewer who was pressing him on this, "You don't understand, it's over."

It is not. What is over is the ceasefire as understood by everyone that bright morning of September 1, 1994. Nobody likes saying this, because it appears to be unhealthy to announce such an unpleasant truth. But it is so.

The IRA declared a "complete cessation of military operations". It did not exclude any categories of human being from its ceasefire: it did not say that the war against the British or the Unionists alone was over, but that social miscreants beware: it declared a complete end to military activity.

In the past couple of months the IRA has murdered seven Catholic men in Northern Ireland. Each one of these killings required a resumption of military activity. So the complete cessation of military activity is over. The IRA is in business again, even while Senator George Mitchell's disarmament commission is doing its best to take the gun out of Northern Ireland's political culture.

The problem is that the gun has been present throughout the history of both Irish states. The state of Northern Ireland grew from an armed conspiracy to prevent all-Ireland Home Rule 84 years ago. The Irish Republic grew from the barrel of the gun. The Sinn Féin-IRA memory is perverse and wildly selective, but this truth it clings to ferociously. What they are, others were.

Meanwhile, Unionists have been observing the melancholy procession of coffins leaving Catholic ghettos and asking, "What sort of ceasefire is this?" One Northern Ireland politician went so far as to say, "The choice is clear and unambiguous: either Sinn Féin or the IRA respect the wishes of the Irish people and end their violence now — totally and permanently — or they are removed from any further involvement in the process of creating peace and a new political dispensation."

These tough words were spoken not by a Northern Unionist but a Northern nationalist: Seamus Mallon, the deputy leader of the SDLP, shortly before the ceasefire, when the IRA was actually killing fewer people than it is now.

The Irish Deputy Prime Minister and Labour Party leader Dick Spring was then equally definite about what was required of Sinn Féin-IRA. "Sinn Féin are not going to become part of the process on the basis of a temporary cessation of violence... I am not going to be part of any government which is negotiating with Sinn Féin on the basis that violence might end. You cannot do business on that basis."

On another occasion he said: "No negotiations can take place with these parties unless there is a clear renunciation of violence... if they want to get into the political process, they [must] renounce violence and declare a permanent ceasefire."

So where does this leave us? In the middle of a ceasefire which is no longer a ceasefire: with Sinn Féin in talks with both the British and Irish Governments even though no renunciation of violence has been uttered and no permanent ceasefire has been declared. These were the very conditions which Dick Spring said would cause him to leave office. He has not left the Government.

The ceasefire is over, but only selectively — on a sort of deferment plan. An equivalent butchery of Northern Catholics by British soldiers would by now be causing bombs to detonate in the City of London, where the war will most likely resume. If it ever does.

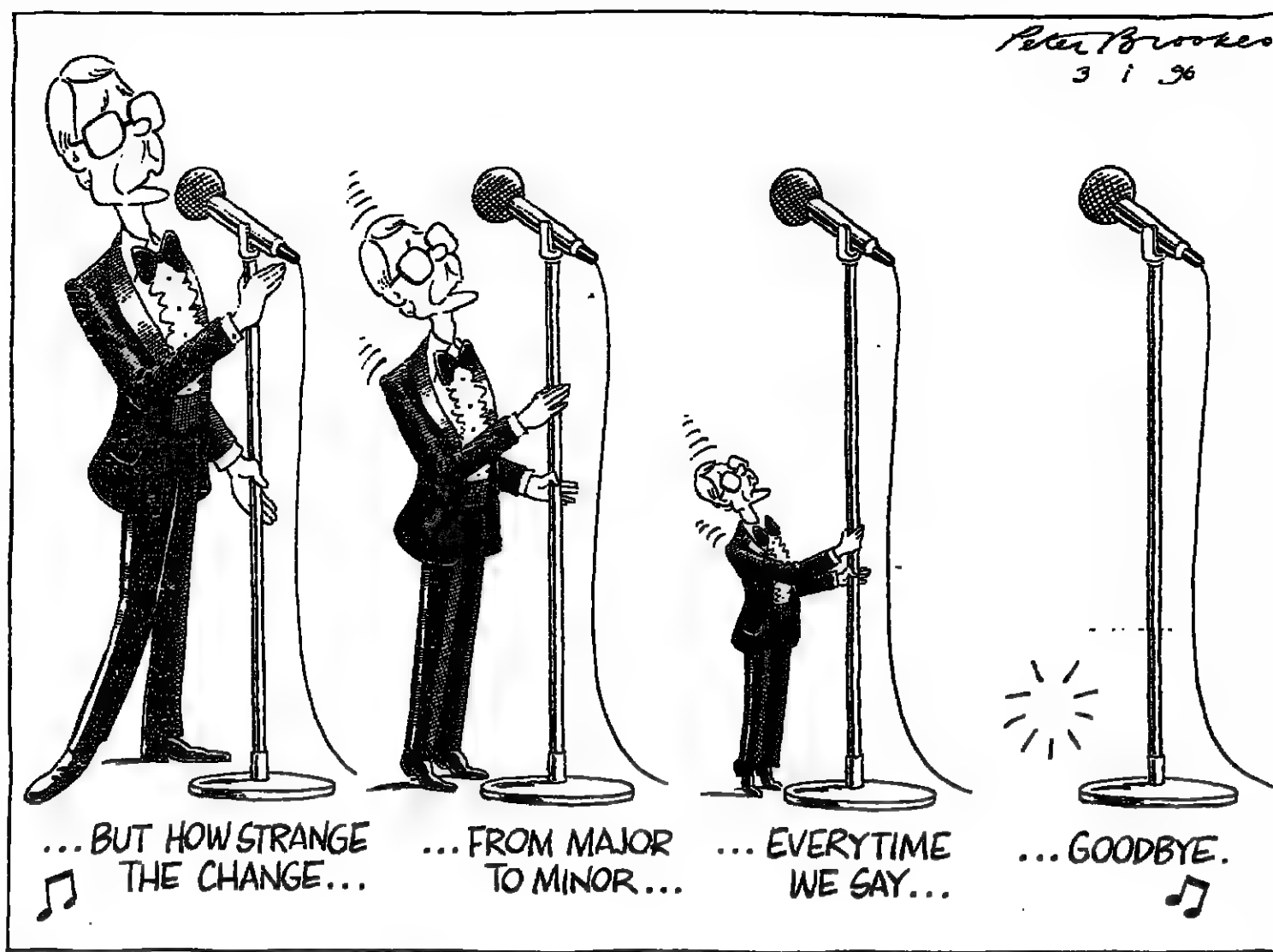
But let us cling to that big if. The IRA is not yet back on the warpath generally. It is merely targeting some Roman Catholic men. So working-class Catholic males now find themselves a lesser species, dispensable and politically unprotected. Their deaths apparently violate no essential accord or ceasefire.

Sixteen months of a "complete cessation of military activities" have bred a general and slothful passivity. Few people in Northern Ireland now have the energy and application required for war, or are prepared to accept the hazards which come with it. But it is clear that IRA hardliners prefer the rule of their guns to the political requirements of the leadership faction of Adams and McGuinness.

The IRA might still call off this wave of killings, but it is not going to disarm. This year is the 80th anniversary of the Easter Rising against British rule in Ireland. George Mitchell will disarm the Michigan Militia before the IRA surrenders its arsenal. Four score years after the Irish Republic began their war to remove the British from Ireland by force of arms, the ambition has not been achieved. But not, most importantly, has it been abandoned.

The author is a columnist for The Irish Times. Alan Coren will appear tomorrow.

Eighty years after the Easter Rising, the aim remains



Time for an election

If John Major thinks he can hang on, he should think again. Sitting it out will not improve his chances

I recall a Sunday school teacher who had to answer the same question each week. "Please Miss, if God is so good why is the world so evil?" The teacher did not subscribe to the Manichaean heresy. Her response would have won plaudits from a Downing Street spin-doctor. "The world is not as bad as television says... Disasters are sent to test us... God is getting His message across... Come Judgment Day the feelgood factor will bring final victory." I marvelled childishly at her ingenuity and wondered how much God was paying her.

John Major faces the same line of questioning, at least from himself. He tries so hard, every day he reads the front pages and feels his eyelids droop over his Westaby. The bowl seems full of piranhas, defying every little dam he erects against them. His spoon cannot scoop up one mouthful of Westaby that does not have piranhas in it. He means well. He really cares. There is nothing honest John would not do to give a guy a break, to win a smile and raise a vote. But all he can see are Emma Nicholson and Spanish trawlers and Michael Portillo and water board chairmen and piranhas. They may be God's creatures, but why are they all in his cereal bowl? It is unfair.

No general election is over until it is over. This year, many a clever pundit will explain that Tony Blair can still collapse and the Tories bring off a coup. We shall learn that Labour has a talent for alienating the electorate and has won just three full-term elections since the war. We shall learn of the unreliability of voting-intention questions in the opinion polls: of the pro-Government "swing" during campaigns; of feelgood factors just round the corner and of Mr Blair and his team becoming more shop-soiled the longer they are left on the shelf. In 1996, we shall be told, Mr Major has many stages on which to shine. He might find glory in Ulster, in Bosnia, even in monetary union.

All these factors can be reckoned to favour the Tories, and thus make it worth hanging on even in a minority administration. Such arguments are cited by the grey-suited ones who gather round Mr Major's fire of an evening to swap jokes about Brian Mawhinney and tell each other the Good News about the Tory record that evil newspapers will not print. The Prime Minister's entourage has acquired some of the middle-brow camaraderie of Wilson's "Winemans".

Kitchen cabinet. Its loyalty must bring a tear to the boss's eye. His reaction is, Why spoil it? As long as the whips can sell some honours and deliver a periodic confidence vote, the team can hang on. It may be "in office but not in power", but office has its compensations.

This does not wash. For a progressive recovery in Mr Major's electoral prospects into 1997 to be plausible, some desperate assumptions are required. His Government must be ready to lose its majority with dignity after another defection or by-election, and then form an Ulster Unionist

coalition with equal dignity. I find this near inconceivable. It must be able to pass measures such as the Budget without substantial defeat or see its economic strategy ruined. Labour yesterday promised to make this difficult. The Cabinet must be ready to abandon any contentious measure opposed by even the smallest handful of disaffected backbenchers. This must render most legislation unpassable without Labour support — the Divorce Bill might be an instance.

Mr Major has disappointed too many backbenchers to expect any resurgent loyalty this year. Emma Nicholson was not famous for malice. What bitterness and frustration can have driven her to the savage timing of her defection this Christmas? There may be just half a dozen MPs of like mind, but that is all it would take to wipe out Mr Major's paper majority. On most substantive votes, that majority must have gone already. There must be dozens of Tories with little hope of office or of re-election who wonder why they should postpone the start of a new career until the middle of 1997.

Meanwhile the dreary steeples of Fermanagh and Tyrone will again cast their shadow over Westminster. Mr Major must stall peace talks in Northern Ireland beyond all reasonable patience. The IRA decommissioning row is not some fastidiousness on the British Government's part. Without it, at least some Unionists will simply walk out of any peace talks. Indeed they may not even walk in. This crisis was bound to come sooner or later. Mr Major must now seek frantic postponement. If only because the official Unionists will not want to be outflanked in intransigence by the Paisleyites. Whether this stalling can be sustained throughout 1996, and with a Cabinet patently knowing to the Unionists, is surely doubtful. Cardinal Cahal Daly warned the Government as much on Sunday.

By early next year, the Government could have two other diplomatic defeats on its hands: the collapse of the Bosnian ceasefire after the promised withdrawal of Nato units, and a failure to halt the introduction of a Franco-German Euro-currency. The first may be postponed at great cost in troops and money, but the second cannot. Mr Major may believe he can expose Mr Blair's weakness for a Euro-currency. But it is unlikely that this will compensate for another year of guerrilla war from his own Eurosceptics. Many of the latter will be demob happy and all but beyond the whips' control.

If I were a Tory party manager, I would wish fervently that 1996 could be ripped out of the calendar. It promises to be a dog of a year, a sequence of banana skins, leaks, ministerial scandals, enforced resignations, rebellions, U-turns, defeats and confidence votes. Every policy will be torn apart, from rail privatisation and "care in the community" to nursery vouchers and lottery profits. Money will be squandered and tax cuts blown in buying off teachers and nurses. The whips' office will seize power from the Cabinet and the Policy Unit. Life in Downing Street will be hell.

Simon Jenkins

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Hung parliaments delight journalists. They foster their view of politics as a congeries of blackmail, hard drinking, corruption and funny goings-on in lavatories. Eatanswill comes to Westminster and stays for the duration. We know what it is like: it is like James Callaghan's 1978-79 administration, a miasma of conspiracies, payoffs and deals. Such parliaments do no good for any government. Ministers appear hogtied and vacillating. Anarchy is blamed on them, not on the anarchists. Sir Edward Heath learnt that in 1974.

The Queen's Speech announced the programme on which Mr Major intends to govern for the last full session of this Parliament. It was a lacklustre affair, allegedly crafted to "put Labour on the spot" on education and immigration. Its intention, in other words, was not so much good government as good opposition to the Opposition. This compliment to Mr Blair's political sovereignty was gratefully accepted.

Judging by Prime Minister's Question Time before Christmas, more time is now spent cross-examining Labour's programme than the Government's. Shadow ministers work under rigid cabinet responsibility. They may make no pledges, specify no policies, and above all commit no money beyond the current Treasury planning total. The Opposition is behaving as if the keys of the Exchequer were already in its pocket. If Mr Major is in office but not in power, Mr Blair seems to be in power but not in office.

We all know that a duel is due to take place between Mr Major and Mr Blair. It need not take place for 15 months, but even the most sympathetic Tory must be appalled at the prospect of that wait. It implies an election campaign longer even than the ridiculed American presidential trail. The next government must in 1997 negotiate the future relations of Britain with Europe. If it is to be led by Mr Major he must have a new mandate. If Mr Blair is to be prime minister, he should start as soon as possible on the learning curve from his present native Euro-enthusiasm to the necessary realism.

The Government found it hard enough to govern with a small majority last year; this year will be worse. There is no good reason for postponing a general election beyond this summer — not even that Mr Major is thereby more likely to win. He is not.

God's own blessed country

Woodrow Wyatt finds contentment close at hand

We cannot sorrow perpetually over all the world's woes without falling into debilitating despair. Feelings of guilt for evils we are helpless to cure are self-indulgence — unless we devote ourselves to practical aid like the Irish Sister, Ethel Normoyle, praised in the Queen's Christmas Day speech for her work in South Africa. As most of us are unsuited to be Sister Ethels, we should not try to emulate her in our minds as we watch on television, or hear on the wireless, the brutalities of Bosnia, the sufferings of the starving in Rwanda or the plight of countless victims of fighting all round the globe. Before instant communications, such things were common, but people's balance was not disturbed by an irrational belief that they could do something. Civilisation began less than 100,000 years ago. We would be happier and of more use if we dwell less on its failures and more on its successes. For those of us who were born, or live, on these sceptred isles, evidence of the latter surrounds us.

One side of my garden is a few yards away from the nursery ground at Lord's. Sometimes a batsman edges a ball over the top of the nets into the flowerbeds, a cheerful reminder of that most civilised of all games, which could have been invented only by the English. Its respect for fair play, keeping a straight bat — and many other such phrases — have spread to those countries blessed by the touch of English civilisation. Though they may quarrel over it occasionally, cricket binds together Indians and South Africans, Pakistanis and Australians. There are few sights as redolent of the best of human nature as joyous West Indian crowds good-humouredly and appreciatively applauding their opponents and cheering the feats of their own side. No country with cricket as one of its national games has ever become communist. If Marx had examined cricket as closely as he did statistics in the British Museum Reading Room, the history of the 20th century might have been different.

The British inherit the graces of Greece, where the civilising properties of games were first realised, which is why almost all major games now played originated here. Though we would like still to be supreme at them, our ungracious acceptance that others now beat us at our own games is very civil.

A cathedral cloister in a summer's dusk, its great tower or spire triumphant in the close, melts the most frozen heart. Inside an ancient cathedral, the religious and irreligious feel the strength of the human attempt to be good coming down through the ages. I do not know what a soul is, but if there is one it is present there. Village greens: towns with market squares overlooked by houses, gems of architecture from across the centuries: a Scottish glen in the gloaming; the superb streets of Glasgow, Edinburgh and Dublin, with classical houses and parks not far away; Caernarvon Castle and the Menai Straits — look where you will, the battle scars of these isles are covered by the gentle moss of time.

Between our densely populated areas, space remains for magnificent scenery. Byron remarked that there are finer views in Derbyshire than any in Greece. The Atlantic Ocean's mighty waves, beating on Cornish rocks and cliffs and surrounding the fairytale St Michael's Mount on the passage from Land's End to the Lizard, are uninterrupted by land until America is reached. It was from tall Poldhu, above Gurnwalloe and its early-15th-century church, built into rocks on the shore, to which I went often as a child, that Marconi sent his first radio messages from the Old World to the New in 1901. I remember his Wireless Telegraphy Station, demolished by some blinkered bureaucrat in 1933.

Perhaps the sweetest and most precious flower to grow in Britain is the English language. Its soil has been the speech of the varied races arriving here during thousands of years. Their mingling has produced the world's most servicable and poetic mode of expression. The language of Shakespeare and Milton, of Shaw and Wilde, of Keats and Yeats, of Dylan Thomas and Aneurin Bevan, of Dickens and Scott, of Newton and Rutherford, of Adam Smith and Hume is readily adaptable to every purpose. It is no miracle that English is the principal conduit of commerce, science, industry and the arts internationally. The British gift of tolerance and assimilation of differing groups has made it so.

In a land where beauty ceaselessly greets the eye and the ear, with a temperate climate which we most prize when hit by extremes of heat or cold, who would not be content? Apart from those stricken by tragedy, none but crotchety misogynists and maniacs, confirmed pessimists and grumblers, or animal-rights activists, the envious, the nether-dwells. Thank God I am a typical Englishman — that is, half Welsh, a quarter Cornish and a quarter from Staffordshire, where my family lived for centuries and where I shall be buried, among the tombs of my ancestors in Weeford, beside the little church rebuilt in 1803 by James Wyatt.

Undiplomatic

THE MOST senior woman in the Foreign Office is on the point of leaving, after turning down the chance to become British Ambassador to Bonn. Pauline Neville-Jones, 55, political director, is said



Pauline Neville-Jones

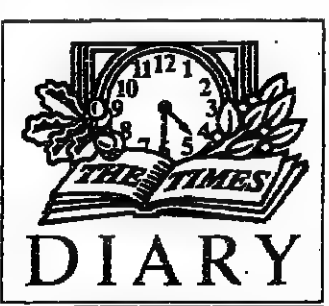
to be furious that she was not offered Paris, which has been taken by Michael Jay, a cerebral chap six years her junior.

Those who have known her for years say that the efficient, strong-willed manner in which she conducts her affairs was invaluable in dealing with the turbulent Bosnians. But it hasn't proved sufficiently emollient for the niceties of diplomatic life.

For her part, Neville-Jones has perhaps had enough of what she may regard as a male-dominated club. She is expected to resign shortly to pursue a new career in a field where her robust attitude will be better valued.

There had been hopes in Downing Street that a woman would soon be given a major ambassadorial post, but the breakthrough will now have to wait. It was not until 1946, after a number of women had served in temporary posts with distinction during the war, that women were recruited to administrative grades. But as late as 1972 they were required to resign on marriage.

Members of the diplomatic old guard argue that Neville-Jones was given her chance in Bonn but



turned it down. Yesterday, a secretary at the Foreign Office said she was unavailable for comment. "She isn't in this office any more. She is away on leave and we don't know if she's staying with us or taking an outside job."

●Hunstanton Golf Club, near Sandringham in Norfolk, was relieved of an annual chore last week — it didn't have to tee up a Christmas golfing partner for Prince Andrew. "We usually arrange for somebody to play with him," explained a source at the club. "He asked to play this year but we sent him away because of the weather."

Look 'ere lad

GIMLET-EYED military folk are up in arms about a new film star-

ring the American brat-pack actor Keanu Reeves. A Walk in the Clouds concerns a beautiful GI in the Second World War (Reeves) who takes a fancy to a young Italian girl.

The concern is that Keanu's earlobe is pierced, and noticeably so. "At that time ear-piercing wasn't done, and he might not have been allowed to join the service," grumbles an American veteran.

The Royal British Legion is equally dismissive. "A pierced ear — never mind an earring — would be looked down on. Chap would never have survived boot camp."



"The blue is reversible, with a choice of red or yellow"

●Contact has been made between two jilted Conservative Associations. Stratford-on-Avon, abandoned by Alan Howarth for the Labour Party, has sent its commissioners by fax to Devon West and Torridge, which lost Emma Nicholson. "It was very sweet of them," blinked a tearful Torridge Tory.

Tricky stuff

THE ABOLITION of Westminster's Select Committee on Employment is to be marked with a wake, at which the star turn will be the committee's pedantic chairman, Greville Janner. Beer and sandwiches will be served in the Commons; then Janner, a member of the Magic Circle, will take to the floor for a conjuring show.

The tricks will start after the 17-year-old committee's final meeting at the end of February. "It's a farewell to life," says Janner. "We've abolished us, so we're having a wake. We're not going out without a bang."

Taurus

THE PREPOSTEROUS planetary pundit Russell Grant sadly failed to predict the effects the cold snap would have on his astrological charts. They have been ruined by a



Roly-poly Grant

flood, caused by burst pipes at his home in Lancashire.

The churlish soothsayer planned to reveal to TV viewers what the new year stars held for the Princess of Wales. But he has changed his scheme because of the flood, which took place as he was recording in London. "I had drawn up my own chart for 1996, and everything was looking good from mid-January onwards," he says. "But I knew I had to get through a double aspect of Neptune and Mars, which signified water and disjointed energy coming together."

P.H.S



THE ARAFAT VOTE

'Free' Palestinians deserve free elections

In just over a fortnight, the Palestinian people will take an historic step. Irrespective of the fine detail in their accords to date with Israel (irrespective, even, of firm assurances to the contrary by the Israeli Government) that step will take them on the road to statehood. On January 20, the Palestinian people will vote to elect their *ra'is*, or "leader", and an 88-member national council. For the first time they will be ruled by men and women of their own election — by an accountable, democratically-elected Palestinian administration. They will, in the process, be the only people in the Arab world to live under rules that resemble democracy as we in the West know it.

That, at least, is the theory; for some it is also the passion. But the early truth, as our correspondent reports today from Jerusalem, has disappointed those anxious for genuine democracy in the Gaza Strip and the "liberated" Palestinian portions of the West Bank. Yasser Arafat, chairman of both the Palestine Liberation Organisation and the interim Palestinian Authority, has shown little taste so far for the spirit of multi-party democracy; and complaints against him, which mount by the day, are made as fiercely by ordinary Palestinians themselves as by disconcerted foreign observers.

The European Union — which is, in fact, paying for the Palestinian elections — is not, so far, impressed. The head of the EU election unit, Carl Lidbom, has responded fiercely to a series of high-handed procedural changes by Mr Arafat to the rules for the elections. Mr Lidbom published a trenchant statement on Monday, calling on the leader of the PLO "to take urgent steps to try to build public and international confidence in the election process". *Enough is Enough*, the statement was entitled, and the EU's choice of language is apt.

The Palestinian election commission, which will oversee the conduct of the polls, is headed by Abu Mazen, a close associate of Mr Arafat. That does not augur well for its objectivity, in what could prove to be a profoundly contentious election. And there is more: in an arbitrary decision, clearly designed to work to the advantage of the PLO, Mr Arafat has subtracted a week from the time permitted to candidates for their election campaigns. Those challenging Mr Arafat, particularly the independents, have been affected badly by this fiat.

Directly related to the elections — and an important indicator of the ill-health of Palestinian democracy — is Mr Arafat's attitude to freedom of the press. Newspapers have been shut at will by the Palestinian Authority, and journalists harassed, ever since it took control of areas returned by Israel under the Oslo accord. The latest example of Mr Arafat's autocracy reveals the dangerous crudity of a panjandrum. Maher al-Aalarni, a senior editor and columnist of *al-Quds*, the largest Palestinian daily, was imprisoned for six days for failing to place a glowing story about the "leader" on his front page.

There was already a large photograph of himself on the front page, but this did not, apparently, satisfy Mr Arafat's thirst for panegyric. Mr Arafat has no need to enforce his superiority in such a suffocating way; he has secured from Hamas, the hard-line Islamic Palestinian opposition, a promise not to disrupt the polls; he has no serious challenger for the post of *ra'is*; and the Israelis, whether from a preference for the man they know or a desire to stay out of the murky depths of internal Palestinian politics, have kept a careful distance. He should not, and need not, persist with a pattern of behaviour that will only harm the interests of the people for whom he has fought.

THE UNION GAVOTTE

Trimble keeps all Westminster on its toes

The Ulster Unionists want to keep everybody guessing. First came the message that they had no intention of voting against the Conservatives on a confidence motion. Now, says John Taylor, their deputy leader, each issue will be taken on its merits, and his party will not automatically support the Tories. Uncertainty is the Unionists' strongest weapon: and they are exploiting it to the full.

Within the next few months, it is possible, even likely, that the Conservatives will have lost their majority. Neither the Liberal Democrats nor the nationalists — Scottish, Welsh or Northern Irish — can be relied on for help. The continuance of this Government therefore would depend most crucially on the Unionists.

Such support would once have been taken for granted. Whatever the Unionists' qualms about an administration that had signed the Anglo-Irish agreement, Labour's united Ireland policy was bound to be worse. But the replacement of John Smith with Tony Blair as Labour leader and of Kevin McNamara with Mo Mowlam as Shadow Northern Ireland Secretary, has brought Labour's policy on Northern Ireland into line with the Tories. New Labour has studiously supported all the Government's moves in the peace process.

Some Labour supporters want a quick reward for this. Since there is nothing to choose between the two parties, they say, would not the Unionists be better off switching their support from a Prime Minister who looks like a lame duck to the man who is likely to be in Downing Street for at least the next five years? Mr Blair needs the Unionists as badly as Mr Major does. If a general election could be held quickly, a large Labour majority would be more likely. Mr Blair should surely, they argue, be prepared to make a few extra concessions to make this hope a reality.

Life in Northern Ireland is never, however, that simple. First, a Labour govern-

ment with a big majority would be bad news for the Unionists; they have maximum leverage in a hung Parliament and an interest in delaying the election in the hope that the Tories' popularity will improve. Secondly, as on so many other aspects of policy, there is still suspicion about Labour's real views: Mr Blair may perhaps differ not at all from Mr Major, but he has said little himself and exploited his grip of party discipline to stifle dissent. This state of affairs cannot be taken for granted in a government whose Cabinet would contain fewer instinctive Unionists. Nor has Mr Blair been tested as a peace process negotiator.

More immediately, there is no concession that Labour could offer that would not disrupt the peace process. If such a concession did exist, Mr Major would almost certainly have offered it by now. The Unionists can, by contrast, hope for solid financial and other favours from the Tories as the porkbarrel is once again rolled Ulster's way.

David Trimble, leader of the Unionists, does have some room for manoeuvre away from traditional support for the Tories. His main rivals, the McCartneyite Independent Unionists, are themselves close to new Labour; cries of "betrayal" from them would ring somewhat hollow. But Mr Trimble must take care. Ulster's Westminster politicians may have taken their measure of New Labour but Unionist voters remain much more cautious. And if Mr Trimble could plausibly be accused of weakening the Union, Mr McCartney would have no compunction in saying so.

Hence the gavotte that is being danced. The Conservatives do not yet need the Unionists, but they soon will. In the meantime Mr Trimble will want to keep them both generous and on their toes. Equally, he will want the best possible working relationship with Labour should it form the next administration. His aim is to keep all potential partners hopeful.

FRANK SAGITTARIUS

The world would be duller without those adventurers born under Sagittarius. Ian Botham did something typically Sagittarian — larger-than-life, visionary — at Headingley in 1981 that will be remembered for as long as polished willow strikes scuffed leather. Sagittarians have rampant egos and talent, but they succeed chiefly by daring to think bigger than the rest. They can see the silver lining in the dreariest cloud. Churchill's wartime speeches are unsurpassable examples of Sagittarian rhetoric.

And once Sagittarians have acquired the wealth, the fame, the glamour and the power that they believe to be their natural inheritance, they know how to flaunt it. If a Sagittarian becomes a movie mogul, like Walt Disney or Steven Spielberg, he sets out to enchant the whole world with his fantastical creations and unshakeable belief in happy endings. In the entertainment world, the Sagittarian's charisma is matched by a determination to be different, to stamp originality on the most mundane or unlikely material. The abrasive Jane Fonda, the thrusting Bette Midler, the waspish Noel Coward, the prickly Billy Connolly: these are essential showbiz Sagittarians.

As is our chosen representative, Francis Albert Sinatra, whose 80th birthday fell last month. When Sinatra broke loose from the

Tommy Dorsey Band in 1943 he not only asserted his own independence, he also changed forever the status of the popular singer. He unleashed a force that was going to transform the nature of mass culture: teenage hysteria. To understand the adulation surrounding Presley in the Fifties or the Beatles in the Sixties is impossible without reference to what happened to not-so-old Blue Eyes in the Forties.

But Sinatra's achievement goes deeper. He belonged to a supremely gifted generation of American vocalists that transformed the art of singing by a combination of superbly discreet technique and intense expression. Even in that select company, Sinatra went further. His very delivery put such a memorable mark on a song that the material seemed to become his property. Hundreds of singers have recorded the words "I did it my way", a true anthem to the Sagittarian spirit. The only version that matters is Sinatra's.

What of the future? Sinatra's closest colleagues have fallen silent, and although he was in the charts only two years ago with his Duets album, he is now unlikely to perform again. This Sagittarian has finally hung up his bow and arrows. But we hope that he looks back on 1995 and dreams "it was a very good year" softly to himself.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Repercussions on an MP's defection

From Mr Michael Fabricant, MP for Staffordshire Mid (Conservative)

Sir, In the continuing turbulence following the defection of Emma Nicholson, accompanied by claims of "lurches to the right" and of "the most left-wing Cabinet a Conservative Prime Minister had chosen in living memory" (report, January 2; leading article and letters, January 1), it is becoming all too easy to categorise Conservative MPs by facile labelling.

Peter Riddell ("Why Emma couldn't stay", January 1) was at least right in saying that her departure from the Conservative Party was the consequence of a "complicated mixture" of reasons. Yet even he talks about "pro-European, One-Nation" Conservatism as if the two were inseparable.

In defining the Tory right it is important to separate out those who are also Euro-sceptic. Of course many of my loudest colleagues are both right wing and Euro-sceptic. But there are many others, including me, who while believing in prudent economic management of the nation also believe in the duty of care that any worthwhile state owes its citizens.

If this is the philosophy of the "centre right" it does not exclude the sharing of the gravest doubts about Britain's future in the European Union and its proposed single currency. Indeed, I would argue that any duty of care for our citizenry ought to include concern about Brussels and the extension of pan-European power at the expense of individual and state freedom to provide that care.

Emma Nicholson may or may not have been a One-Nation Tory. She is certainly enthusiastic about European Union, as testified by the Liberal Democrats' federal European policy. But the two do not necessarily go hand in glove and all political commentators — and their readers — should be aware of this. Euro-scepticism is not the sole province of the Tory far right.

Yours faithfully,
MICHAEL FABRICANT,
House of Commons,
January 2.

From Mr T. A. Backhouse

Sir, As a life-long Conservative voter I have been increasingly doubtful of my ability to continue loyal. An accumulation of blunders and dishonourable behaviour has led me to suspect that the only solution to the party's problems is a period in opposition and a change of leadership.

The culmination is the snide and disgusting reaction by leading Tories to Emma Nicholson's resignation. Can they not recognise that one individual's view of personal integrity may not always be a precise duplicate of their own? Now that Major has joined in (report, January 1), I want nothing more to do with the party under the current leadership.

Had Mr Major stated his acceptance of Miss Nicholson's right to set matters differently from himself and wished her luck I might have held on for a bit longer; but I am not too sure now even of that.

Yours faithfully,
TONY BACKHOUSE,
St Margaret's Cottage,
Polgoath, Cornwall,
January 1.

From Mrs Gillian Bardin

Sir, Watching recent events in Britain from this side of the Channel, one wonders whether John Major's qualities are really understood. Possibly alone among present European heads of government, he has consistently shown both wisdom and shrewdness. To Europe, as to Ireland, he has brought patience and tenacity. His achievements are already considerable, his long-term targets now in view.

A short spell working in almost any of our European partner countries would be salutary to the Major-bashers. Faced with income tax well over 40 per cent, corporation taxes prohibitive in many cases of the creation or running of small businesses, heavy social welfare contributions, oppressive bureaucracy and the ominous presence of real right-wing parties, they would soon regret the tangible feel of personal freedom and prosperity which meets the visitor to Britain.

It is becoming increasingly clear to me that John Major's cautious, thoughtful approach is the very one favoured by many people in Europe.

Yours sincerely,
GILLIAN BARDIN,
21 rue Saint-Honoré,
78000 Versailles, France,
January 2.

From Mr Gerard Lakmaker

Sir, Whether Conservative, Labour or Liberal Democrat, an MP is not there as Emma, Dick or Harry but as the representative of the voters for a particular party. It is every MP's right to resign if his or her conscience no longer allows them to vote with the party, but by "crossing the floor" they are cheating the voters in their constituency.

Yours faithfully,
G. LAKMAKER,
Greenhill House,
41 Gayton Road, Harrow, Middlesex,
January 1.

Letters for publication should carry contact telephone numbers. We regret that we cannot accept letters by telephone but they may be sent by fax to 0171-782 5046.

Fairness of courts-martial system

From Professor Peter Rowe

Sir, In referring to the opinion of the European Commission of Human Rights in the case of Alexander Findlay, Sir Frederick Lawton (letter, December 28) argues that any changes to the courts-martial system should be "based on the experience of those who have to work it, not on the reasoning of continental lawyers".

There is a timely procedure for this. It will be for the House of Commons Select Committee on the Armed Forces Bill 1995-96 to consider the proposed changes.

As it stands at present, Clause 12 of the Bill would abolish the requirement to confirm findings of courts-martial and Clause 14 would enable the Courts-Martial Appeal Court to hear appeals against sentence. Should these clauses be acceptable to Parliament they will, in effect, result in more cases coming before the Courts-Martial Appeal Court, a purely civilian court on which Sir Frederick served with distinction.

An almost identical situation was considered by the Supreme Court of Canada in *R v. Gosselin* in 1992 in construing Article 11(d) of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which also required a person to be tried by an independent and impartial tribunal.

The court decided that "the appropriate question is whether the tribunal, from the objective standpoint of a reasonable and informed person, will be perceived as enjoying the essential conditions of independence". It is likely that the European Court of Human Rights would take the same view.

In the meantime the opportunities presented by the select committee will enable any necessary changes to the courts-martial system to be made with

the benefit of the experience of "those who have to work it", as Sir Frederick wishes.

Yours faithfully,
PETER ROWE,
Lancaster University,
Department of Law,
Lancaster LA1 4YN.

From His Honour Judge Anthony Thorpe

Sir, With 30 years' service in the Royal Navy before I was appointed to the Bench in 1990 I can endorse everything Sir Frederick Lawton has said about the fairness of the courts-martial system in the Armed Forces.

I have never had any doubt that defendants receive as fair a trial as possible before what is, essentially, a court of highly qualified assessors. Defendants in the Royal Navy also have the advantage, if they choose, of the services of a naval barrister. Free legal representation is not something that happens often in the Crown Court.

What the European Commission of Human Rights may have forgotten is that the courts-martial system is one that has to function, if required, in a theatre of operations. Any suggestion that trial should be by a jury panel drawn from the local electorate, or simply by civilian judges sent out from the UK, is unlikely to commend itself to anyone in the Armed Forces.

I wonder how the commission view the fact that in trial by lay justices (who conduct over 90 per cent of trials in England and Wales) the evidence is not recorded, whereas in a naval court martial a full transcript is made.

Yours truly,
ANTHONY THORPE,
79 Bishopsgate Walk,
Chichester, West Sussex,
December 28.

Caring by numbers

From Mr Paul Tunbridge

Sir, Mr Ted Bell has drawn attention (letter, December 27; see also letter, December 18) to Noel Coward's request to address *Aircraftman Shaw* (alias T. E. Lawrence) by the first three digits [338] of his service number, when his last three [171] would have been even more personal.

To the "few" of the 35,000 or so pre-war RAF the first three digits would indicate when and where an airman had begun his service. A complete block of service numbers was allocated to each initial training unit, whether at Uxbridge for unskilled recruits (like T. E. Lawrence) or at aircraft apprentice schools, such as Halton, Cranwell, etc.

T. E. Lawrence received two different RAF service numbers: the first on his enlistment at Uxbridge in 1922 as 352087 AC2 J. H. Ross, and three years later, after his departure, a lower number on his transfer back

from the Royal Tank Corps (7576598 Private T. E. Shaw) as 338171 AC2 T. E. Shaw.

Yours sincerely,
PAUL TUNBRIDGE,
30 Avenue Krieg, 1208 Geneva,
January 1.

From Mr Len Digby

Sir, "An airman", writes Mr Ted Bell, "would be known by his name and last three digits". So were soldiers.

Where, I wonder, is Digby 401 — the young man standing next to me on March 17, 1949, the day we started our National Service in the Royal Signals at Catterick?

We had been ordered to line up in alphabetical order, prior to numbers being allocated. I only knew him briefly as we went off to be taught different trades.

Yours faithfully,
LEN DIGBY (2212400 Digby L.E.),
12 Longside,
Bell Hill, Billericay, Essex,
December 27.

Clerical collars

From Mr D. E. L. Crawley

Sir, In the matter of substitute clerical collars (letters, December 23, 28), surely the manufacturers of washing-up liquid are missing an opportunity both to promote their product and help to restore the sadly depleted revenues of the Church of England.

Clergy, in their unique position, night, through sponsorship, be persuaded to spread the message that cleanliness is next to godliness.

Yours faithfully,
D. E. L. CRAWLEY,
Ambleside,
Cedar Hill, Alton, Staffordshire,
January 1.

Daylight Bill

From Mr Elliot Bishop

Sir, Brian Gordon (letter, December 30) fails to recognise that a move to Central European Time would delay the onset of the Sabbath on Fridays by one hour. In the winter months, this is of great significance.

For those orthodox Jews in employment the Bill ameliorates to a degree the position whereby they must either leave their places of work substantially earlier or wrestle with their consciences and remain for fear of job security.

However, being both a practising Jew and a Euro-sceptic, I find myself in that stereotypical position of being a Jew with more than one opinion!

Sincerely yours,
ELLIOT BISHOP,
2 Catonfield Road,
Calderstones, Liverpool 18.

Council tax troubles

From Mrs C. A. Hirst

Sir, A full explanation of my difficulty in obtaining council tax rebates (News in brief, December 16) would occupy two full columns in your newspaper.

Suffice to say the exercise took place over a period of three years and is only partially resolved. There is no mention in correspondence of the approximately £800 the council owes me through overcharging.

Anyone who contemplates applying will need inordinate determination and energy, qualities which deteriorate in old age.

Yours faithfully,
AUDREY HIRST,
9 Livingston Drive North,
Liverpool, Merseyside.

Balanced attitude to minority rights

From Mr Geoffrey Bindman

Sir, Roger Scruton's denunciation of group rights (article, December 21) and the European Court ruling on the rights of gypsies denies the evident truth that prejudice and discrimination are most damagingly directed at membership for supposed membership of a group.

Oppression of minorities, which has persisted unchecked for generations, can only be remedied by measures that seek to redress economic and social imbalances.

Unfortunately, tackling discrimination only by reference to individual cases leaves the problem virtually untouched. The failure of the earliest anti-discrimination laws here and in the United States clearly demonstrated this.

It is true that laws against discrimination and affirmative action programmes have not always been implemented sensitively or sensibly. Yet they have been highly successful in the United States in opening up opportunities for black people, and the techniques are equally applicable elsewhere.

Professor Scruton's scaremongering comparison with the worst excesses of the French Revolution is an absurdity. I find his concern for those adversely affected by anti-discrimination policies one-sided and unfair because it is not matched by equal concern for the victims of discrimination.

The democratic instincts of Thomas Paine are preferable to Edmund Burke's patrician sophistries.

Yours faithfully,
GEOFFREY BINDMAN,
Bindman & Partners (solicitors),
275 Gray's Inn Road, WCI,
January 1.

Still running

From Mr J. R. E. Robinson

Sir, "Overwork could send you to an early grave" due to stress, one cause of which is the pace of life, according to Valerie Grove's interview with Professor Cary Cooper (December 29). A similar view was taken by Matthew Arnold (1822-88) when he wrote in *The Scholar Gipsy* (1853):

O born in days when wits were fresh
And life ran gaily as the sparkling Thames;
Before this strange disease of modern life,
With its sick hurry, its divided aims,
Its heads overtaxed, its palsied hearts,
Was life —

Has there been very much change since the last century?

Yours sincerely,
JONATHAN ROBINSON,
102 Moreton Road, Buckingham,
December 29.

Amplified opera

From the Chairman of the English Bach Festival Trust

Sir, Mr Richard Fisher's letter (December 26) deploring the use of amplification at the London Coliseum for its production of *La Belle Vivette* is timely.

I quote back to you from your music critic's review (December 12) of the English Bach Festival's production of the Molière-Lully *Bourgeois Gentilhomme* at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, on December 10: "Perhaps the most startling... element of the performance, as a time when people maintain that you can't deliver dialogue in big theatres without amplification, was the unaided clarity of the spoken text. Every wittily intoned line came ringing out loud and clear..."

Yours faithfully,
RALPH EMERY,
Chairman,
The English Bach Festival Trust,
15 South Eaton Place, SW1,
December 26.

Promises, promises

From Mr F. R. Maher

Sir, "Inconvenience? What inconvenience?" Mrs Wise asks of the charity which offered to dispatch her order for Christmas cards during the week ending January 12 (letter, December 29).

What did she make of your offer to readers, advertised on December 29, of *The Times Atlas of the World*, advising us that "The Times cannot guarantee delivery before Christmas"?

Yours faithfully,
F. R. MAHER,
22 Lupin Drive,
Huntington, Chester,
January 1.

Reading at leisure

From Mr Henry G. Button

Sir, A book is said to have been returned to a library in north London 63 years late (report, December 28).

A German book about the archbishops of Bremen that had been borrowed from the library of Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, in 1667-68 by Robert Walpole, the father of Sir Robert Walpole, was returned to the library by the Marquess of Cholmondeley in 1936, 288 years later. Professor Sir John Plumb had found the book in the library of the marquess at Houghton Hall in Norfolk.

Yours faithfully,
HENRY BUTTON,
7 Amhurst Court,
Grange Road, Cambridge,
December 29.

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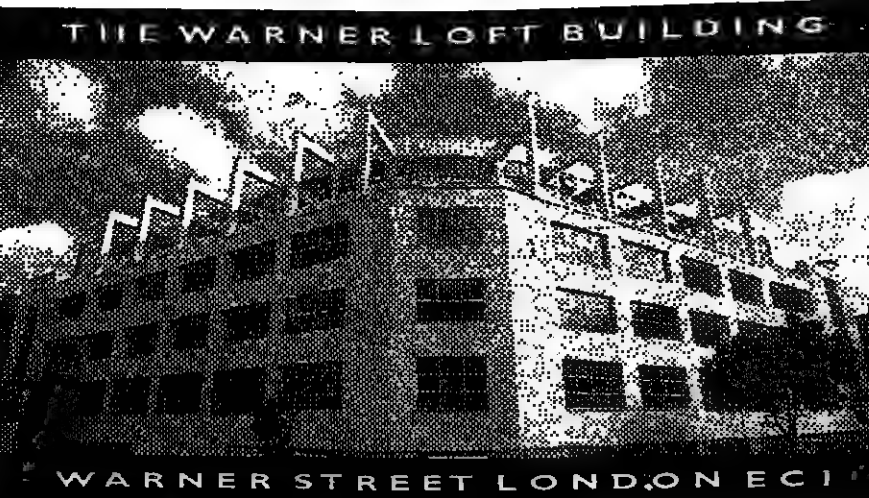
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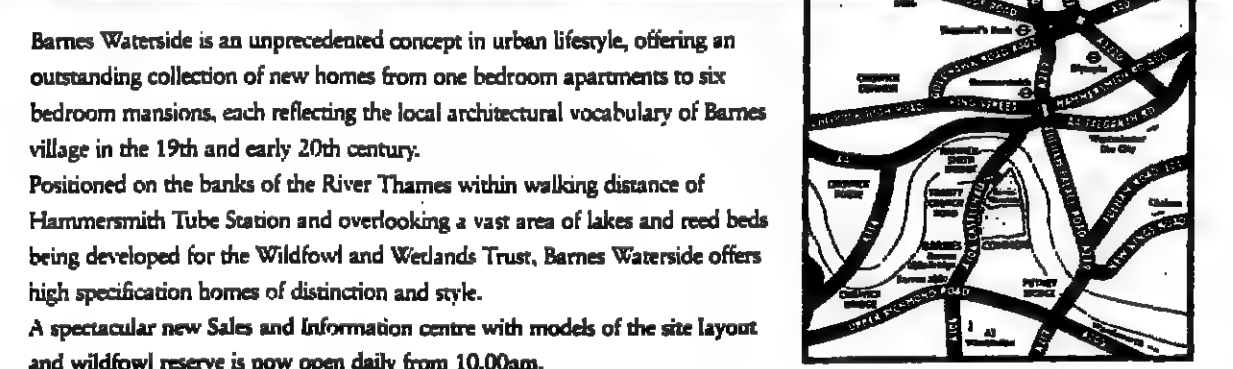
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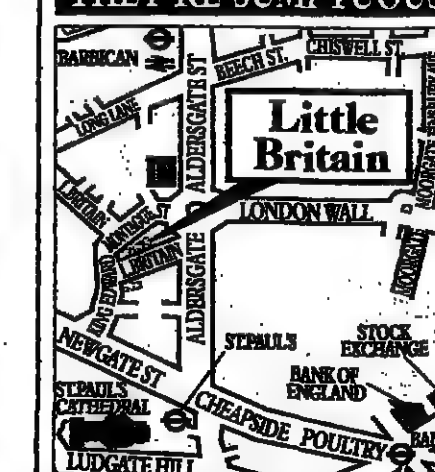
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Above: Rymans, the 15th-century house near Chichester in West Sussex, and right: the sitting room of one of the newly built Berkeley Homes in Upper Hampstead Walk, London NW3



The 18th-century Parsonage Farmhouse in Pitton, Wiltshire, which has style, manageability, and a pretty garden of half-an-acre, which was sold two weeks after it was first advertised

Sold before the board goes up

What makes a house sell? That is the question on the lips of every family planning to move this year.

Estate agents are fond of the reply that good houses in good locations always sell. But properties which have had a "Sold" sign slapped over their "For Sale" board within days, if not hours, could prove a better guide to success.

Their individual sales histories could hold lessons for this new year. With the help of Savills and Knight Frank, *The Times* has trawled the files from last year to find 1995's fastest selling houses. What were their secrets?

In the country, the best sellers seem to be pretty period properties with six acres, to the south and west of London. They are in or on the edge of a village, and have a sense of community while preserving some privacy. East Angles in out, Berkshire and Hampshire are in. "I could sell 100 of these houses next week," says Patrick Ramsay, from Knight Frank. Buyers are no longer interested in trophy houses with long drives and over-blown proportions. No one wants to be over-housed.

"Professionals are working longer hours these days," says Mr Ramsay. "So commuting distances are crucial. Top areas for 1996 are Henley, Ascot, Esher and Beaconsfield. Further afield, the west will fare best — the Downs around

Hungerford or the Cotswolds between Cirencester and Stow-on-the-Wold, which are popular because of their attractive countryside.

"Modern and period houses will both sell well this year," says Mr Ramsay. "The ones that fall between these two stools will be harder to sell, that is, architect-designed houses that now look old-fashioned, and 1920s and 1930s houses that remain unmodernised."

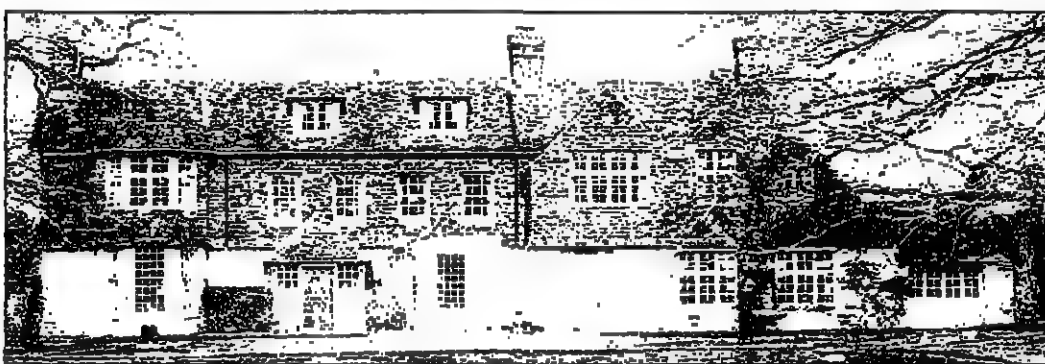
Five to eight bedrooms are ideal, says Mr Ramsay, and there ought to be at least three bathrooms, but preferably more. Period outbuildings are becoming increasingly popular as people want to have an office from home or house horses or cars. Fewer and fewer buyers want the hassle of six months of builders, and property in good condition is now at a premium.

In London, the ideal comprises a combination of good proportions, high ceilings with original features, and state-of-the-art accessories. Wandsworth has established itself as an ideal family location, with Hampstead and Kensington remaining popular.

All agents stress the need for correct pricing. Price a house wrongly and it will fail to sell, thereby becoming tainted. But that, as they say, is another article.

Hattingley House, Hampshire
Hattingley was sold even before it was officially put on the market, for more than its £975,000 asking

All those who wish to move during 1996 will want to know what makes a house sell well and quickly. Rachel Kelly studies the best-selling houses of 1995 to find the answer



Hattingley House in Hattingley, Hampshire, which was sold before it came on the market

price. The house dates back to the 1530s with extensive Georgian and Victorian extensions. To the south is a stable which was once home to three British dressage champions, Wengel, Waldan and Royal Star, and now houses a fancy automatic central heating system. The house has a large hall, three reception rooms, seven bedrooms, a separate staff flat and a two-bedroom cottage to the north of the courtyard, plus nine acres and three post and rail paddocks.

Mr Ramsay, from Knight Frank, says: "This sold quickly because it is an attractive period house, within

an hour's commuting of London, with paddocks, cottage and equestrian facilities, and with not too much land. It is the kind of manageable house that the newly rich want."

Upper Hampstead Walk, London NW3
Berkeley Homes did well last year by concentrating on the top end of the market which has been perkier than the vast ramp of less distinguished housing. In Hampstead, Victorian buildings have been refurbished and new townhouses built at Upper Hampstead Walk, with prices for 57 new homes

between £155,000 and £685,000. Half of the development was sold in three weeks.

Grant Alexson, of Knight Frank, says: "The strength of the sales shows the continuing demand for high-quality townhouses and flats in Hampstead. The houses have been built with the best kind of fittings in their kitchens and bathrooms. Busy professionals will pay not to have the hassle." The development has car parking spaces, some underground, and a gym. These are the kind of American-style extras now commanding a premium in a market with largely

aging and dilapidated housing stock.

"And, of course," Mr Alexson says, "this is the right location. Things haven't changed much since Robert Louis Stevenson said that 'Hampstead is the most delightful place for the air and the scenery near London'. The area has a unique village atmosphere, a sense of space, and is within reach of central London."

Parsonage Farmhouse, Pitton, Wiltshire

This 18th-century farmhouse was sold just two weeks after it was first advertised for sale for £285,000. Robin Gould from Savills says: "1995 was marked by buyers' selectiveness for better-quality houses. Parsonage Farmhouse offered the combination of style, manageability, and a pretty garden of just more than half an acre. For these reasons the house proved unbeatable in a market where not much quality property is being offered for sale."

Rymans, near Chichester, West Sussex

The Grade I listed house was advertised in *Country Life* in June, at between £600,000 and £650,000. By the following week, several firm offers had been made. Ten days later the eight-bedroom house, with its formal walled parterre gardens and 14 acres, was sold for more than its guide price.

Ian Stewart, from Savills, says: "Rymans has the equivalent of sex appeal. It caught the imagination of

everyone who saw it. In fact the final buyers hadn't even been looking to buy when they happened to see it in *Country Life*. Last year we saw exceptional properties sell well: houses with that 'it' appeal. I think the same will be true during this year."

The appeal of Rymans is that it combines 15th-century architecture with trefoil windows, a spiral staircase and square-topped windows with reveals. Ian Nairn, in the *Sussex* edition of *The Buildings of England*, writes: "The extreme delicacy of the panelling in the house is best seen in the wing, with its built-in garderobe and three windows of graduated size facing east, south, and west which admit different amounts of light in the workshop and bedroom. Here, the 15th century considered the quality of life with as much care as the most painstaking 20th-century designer. The bedroom has all three windows in authentic condition and an original fireplace."

Chester Square, London SW1

A house in the square was sold before the completion of redevelopment for £3.5 million for an 89-year lease, to the chairman of an international company, Camilla Lindsay, from Knight Frank, says: "The house had air-conditioning, a lift and a garage — to have all three is rare in a London house. It was special because the buyer wished to design the interior to fit his own requirements."

Can there be a community spirit in a residential megalith? Guy Walters reports

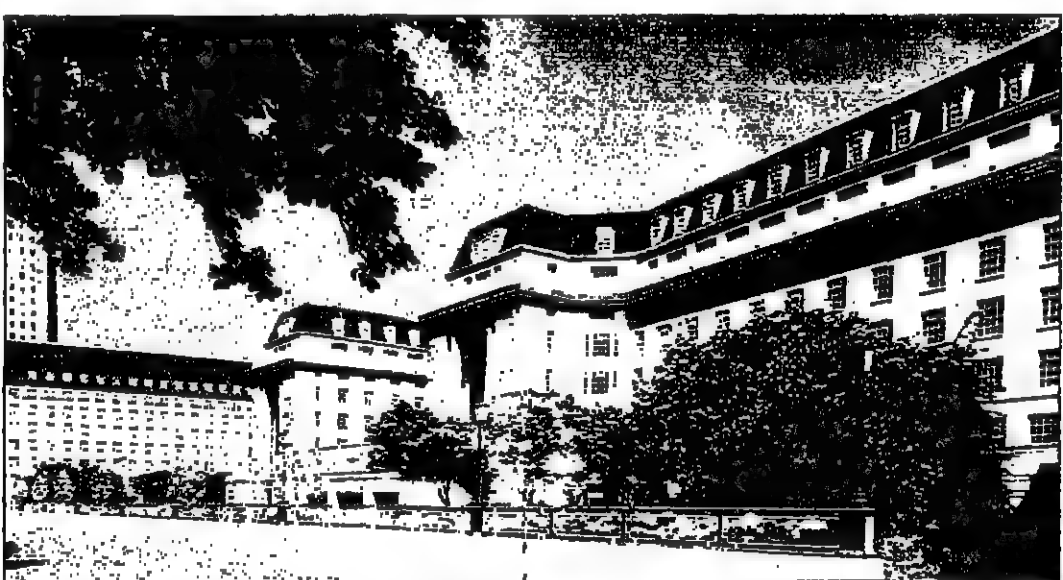
New flats snapped up in the capital

New flats in London are out-performing much of the rest of the metropolitan property market. Agents report successful sales at developments such as County Hall, the former headquarters of the Greater London Council, which is being converted into 411 apartments. Buyers can enjoy a swimming pool, health club and gymnasium. Prices for one-bedroom apartments start at £250,000 and three-bedrooms range from £250,000 to £375,000.

In Hampstead in north London, the decaying student union buildings of London University's old Westfield College are being razed. Out goes the subterranean dance floor and airport lounge bar and in comes a swimming pool, gym, sauna, spa and squash court for the residents of the 149 apartments and penthouses. Westfield will be completed at the end of 1997, but with a two-bedroom apartment costing about £350,000, and a 1,600 sq ft penthouse at £685,000, it is hardly likely to attract many of those graduates in search of nostalgia.

In Battersea, southwest London, Berkeley Homes is erecting Riverside Plaza, in which many of the 76 apartments have river views across to Chelsea Harbour. Prices start at £169,950 for two bedrooms, while £449,950 will buy a 1,755 sq ft apartment with three bedrooms over two floors. Riverside Plaza does not have a gymnasium, but it does have the Harbour Club just over Wandsworth Bridge.

Such developments, of which these three are typical, are becoming increasingly popular. More than 4,000 bedrooms' worth of such flats are coming on to the market in the next 36 months, and



County Hall, the river-front former headquarters of the Greater London Council, and (right) a bedroom in the converted building

many are situated in unfashionable parts of London.

Surely those who can afford £375,000 for three bedrooms would rather live in a more upmarket and established area such as Kensington? And wouldn't living in County Hall be like squatting in an anonymous Holiday Inn on the outskirts of Newark, New Jersey? In short, can there be a community spirit within a self-contained megalith?

Alison Dean, of Savills, says: "The people who buy into these developments tend to be gregarious types who bring their own sense of community with them. A few years ago, many Londoners were against the notion of living in such places, but now they have warmed to them."

During one weekend at the end of October, 2,500 people visited County Hall, and 100 flats were sold in one day. Ms Dean regrets not moving into such a development herself.

Overseas buyers make up about 40 per cent of purchasers, attracted by the high finishes and problem-free properties on offer. Sixty per cent of apartments are sold to British buyers, some of whom use the properties as places where they

can spend weekends in the capital. Some foreigners, particularly the Chinese, buy the apartments for their children who are studying at British universities, and sell them for a small return when the degree is completed.

Others are attracted by the investment potential. At County Hall, for example, apartments could be let for an estimated yield of between 9 and 13.3 per cent.

Many of the visitors at the County Hall weekend were hunt-

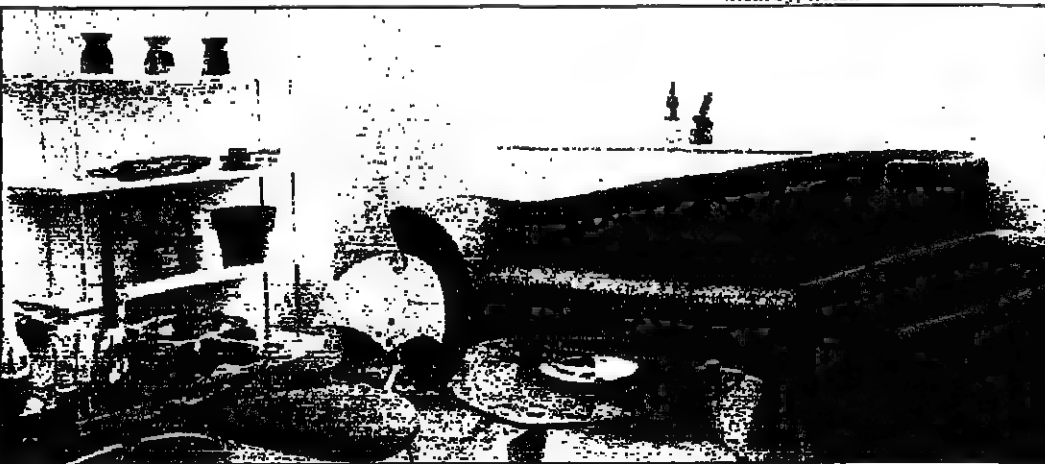
ing on behalf of elderly relatives: others were young couples buying for the first time. Most are attracted to these "mansions of the gods" by their low maintenance and security.

Few seem to be particularly interested in gyms. "What gyms represent is an image of a lifestyle," Ms Dean says. "And that is something that people buy into. They may, of course, never use the gym."

However, not all of these residen-

tial schemes are welling up in old offices and offbeat boroughs. LCR Developments is transforming the better part of Stanhope Gardens in South Kensington into two, three and four-bedroom apartments.

The hubb promises genteel living: "Plans for the development of the gardens include the provision of a tennis court and a croquet lawn. On fine days, residents will also be able to enjoy morning coffee or afternoon tea served at tables on the lawn by waiters from the (nearby) hotel."



A stylish sitting-room in the County Hall development — 100 of the 411 flats were sold in a single day

Don't forget to fix the flue

In the search for old-fashioned open fires, chimneys are often neglected

Blazing open fires are returning to living rooms. People living in modern homes want all the period features put in, says Lucy Searle, of *HomeStyle* magazine.

The Solid Fuels Association has found that the number of people installing open fires from 1993 to 1994 leapt by 200,000 in an otherwise declining heating market. The Public Health (London) Act prohibits excessive smoke from chimneys, but smokeless fuels and appliances which keep fires burning longer make open fires easy to maintain.

People want that old-world feel again," Roland Curtis, of the Solid Fuels Association (SFA) says. "No one struggles up to a radiator."

Decorative as an open fireplace may be, many people do not appreciate the hazards of an untended chimney. September to April is known as the "chimney fire season", and of the 1,000 fires that the Central Statistical Office records each year, most are caused by blocked flues.

"It is a neglected part of the house," Sheila Booth, of the National Association of Chimney Sweeps (NACS), says. "Because it is out of sight, people don't think about what can go wrong." Soot builds up quickly, blocking the chimney's passage of air and preventing the escape of poisonous gases, such as carbon monoxide. A vent, usually built into an outside wall near the fire to keep air circulating, is important. However, John Ball, a heating and combustion consultant, says that people are reluctant to install them. "Because vents can be unsightly, people sometimes don't want them. Houses are so well sealed now it is vital that people are aware of the need for ventilation."

Having the correct cowl, a kind of chimney-pot hat with holes,

helps a fire to breathe. Of the 150 types on sale, only a few are suitable for solid-fuel fires. Martin Glynn, a sweep of 23 years, says ill-fitting cowls make his job "a nightmare" by not creating sufficient draught.

Another common cause of fire is the burning of household or bituminous wood. It may be cheap, but is dangerous if used before two years' storage. "People tend to pick up the wood and burn it while it's damp," Mr Glynn says. "The moisture causes tar to build up in the flue. It is highly flammable and catches light when the fireplace is re-lit." The SFA recommends smokeless wood, which, although more expensive, burns longer and leaves less ash.

Attempts to light fires with paraffin or petrol is another cause of chimney fires. So, too, is the lack of sweeping. Chimneys should be cleaned at least twice a year.

It is important to have a chimney draught-checked when converting a fireplace. Sweeps use power-smoke machines to blow smoke up chimneys to check for leaks. Because the heat from open fires is fierce, chimneys need to be robust, the National Fire Place Association says. Should a chimney catch alight, it should always be tackled by the fire brigade. A fire that appears extinguished is often smouldering in the flue.

Close-mesh guards, regular sweeping and smokeless fuel can all help to avoid fires. Most importantly, have a fire alarm installed, Tony Mortimer, of the London Fire Brigade, says.

JENNAI COX

● The Solid Fuels Association (0171-405 0353); the National Fire Place Association (01494 713 553); the National Association of Chimney Sweeps (01785 311 733).

A LUXURY beach house in Hawaii has had its price slashed by \$8.2 million to \$5.8 million and American estate agents are marketing the house here in the hope of attracting a British buyer, Jennai Cox writes.

Bids are being sought for the Schutter Estate on Hawaii's island of Oahu. Once the home of successful American trial lawyer David Schutter, who in the 1980s borrowed heavily to indulge his hobby of entertaining America's sporting celebrities by building them a retreat, the estate was repossessed on November 1. The American firms Kennedy-Wilson

Just £5.8m for a Hawaiian dream estate

International and Conley Dew are selling the property for the Bank of Hawaii at a 60 per cent discount. For a quick sale the property is to be auctioned and a deadline of January 15 has been set for any offers.

The plot Mr Schutter secured was one of only half a dozen on the "millionaire's row" section of Kahala Beach, with a sandy beachfront. Here Robert Louis

Stevenson took walks and tea on the beach with the last king of Hawaii's daughter, whom he befriended before going on to Samoa. Sylvester Stallone, Lionel Richie and Shakile O'Neal are a few of the famous who have partied or worked out on the estate.

On an island famous for spectator sports, the facilities are unequalled. An underwater tunnel connects two swim-

ming pools; if the two-minute walk to the sea seems too far, there is also a spa, sauna, steam bath and a salt water flotation tank. Although the Waialae golf course is within walking distance, the estate has a netted golf and batting cage plus two grass tennis courts, a basketball court, billiard table and exercise room.

Mr Schutter enjoyed the high life for a

decade before the bank called in the multi-million dollar loan used to build it. The entrance has doors sculpted from redwood and trimmed with copper. Windows extend 27½ from floor to ceiling in the main living room and six skylights illuminate the atrium over an oak and smoked glass spiral staircase.

Guests can choose from 17 bedrooms and 21 bathrooms in the two buildings

which make up the resort. At 700 sq ft, the master bedroom is the size of a small apartment, with Italian marble floors, sunken whirlpool bath and a large shower. Additional landscaping includes waterfalls, a fishpond and an outdoor pavilion, with views across the palm trees on the Hawaiian beachfront.

● The deadline for bids is January 15, 7am British time. Inquiries: Conley Dew Ltd, 201 Merchants Street, Ste. 2200, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813 (01 808 524 2844) or Kennedy-Wilson International, 530 Wilshire Blvd, Ste. 101, Santa Monica, California 90401 (01 800 522 666-6).

NEWS

Inquiry into water mains burst

Water companies were ordered to explain why up to a million households were left without supplies for the second successive night.

With the Army on standby in the worst-hit areas of the North East and Scotland, people queued for up to an hour to fill bottles and buckets from tankers and bowers. Hospitals cancelled routine operations and many schools may not be able to start the new term on time next week. Pages 1, 3

Royal bodyguard hurt skiing

The Prince of Wales's principal bodyguard broke his leg on an alpine ski run at Klosters in Switzerland while protecting the royal party during their skiing holiday. Inspector Tony Parker was found by a guide and the Prince, who stayed with him until a helicopter arrived. Page 1

Land of the free

More than 300 British employees at the US embassy in London are now working gratis for Uncle Sam because the Grosvenor Square mission has run out of money to pay them. Page 1

Gas compensation

British Gas bowed to mounting pressure from consumers and said it would compensate customers left without heating after it failed to repair systems covered by its agreements. Page 1

IRA blamed

The Northern Ireland peace process faced its gravest crisis after Sir Patrick Mayhew blamed the IRA for murdering seven alleged drugs dealers. Page 2

Resignation fight

Sir Nicholas Lyell and William Waldegrave are to fight calls for their resignation that will follow the report of the long-running Scott inquiry into the arms-to-Iraq affair. Page 2

Railway chase

Passengers chased and caught an alleged rapist after his terrified victim banged on the windows of their late-night commuter train in south London, a court was told. Page 3

Lottery appeal

Virginia Bottomley is to appeal to Middle Britain in an attempt to regain the moral high ground for the National Lottery. Page 4

Another drop in drink-driving

Drink-driving offences fell for the fourth successive Christmas as motorists heeded the tough advertising campaign. Police recorded 4,330 positive breath tests over Christmas and New Year in England and Wales compared with 4,706 last year, a fall of 8 per cent. But one in five of the drivers failed the test after being in an accident. Pages 1, 5

Driving skills

Questions that thousands of learner drivers will have to answer in a written examination before they can take to the roads were revealed. Page 5

Death sentence

Twenty rare creatures could become extinct this year. The British centre monitoring wildlife said that the animals were "critically endangered" by pollution, poaching and the booming human population. Page 6

Pavlova's last wish

Anna Pavlova, the greatest ballerina the world has known, made a dying wish to return to her "beloved Russia". Page 7

French scandal

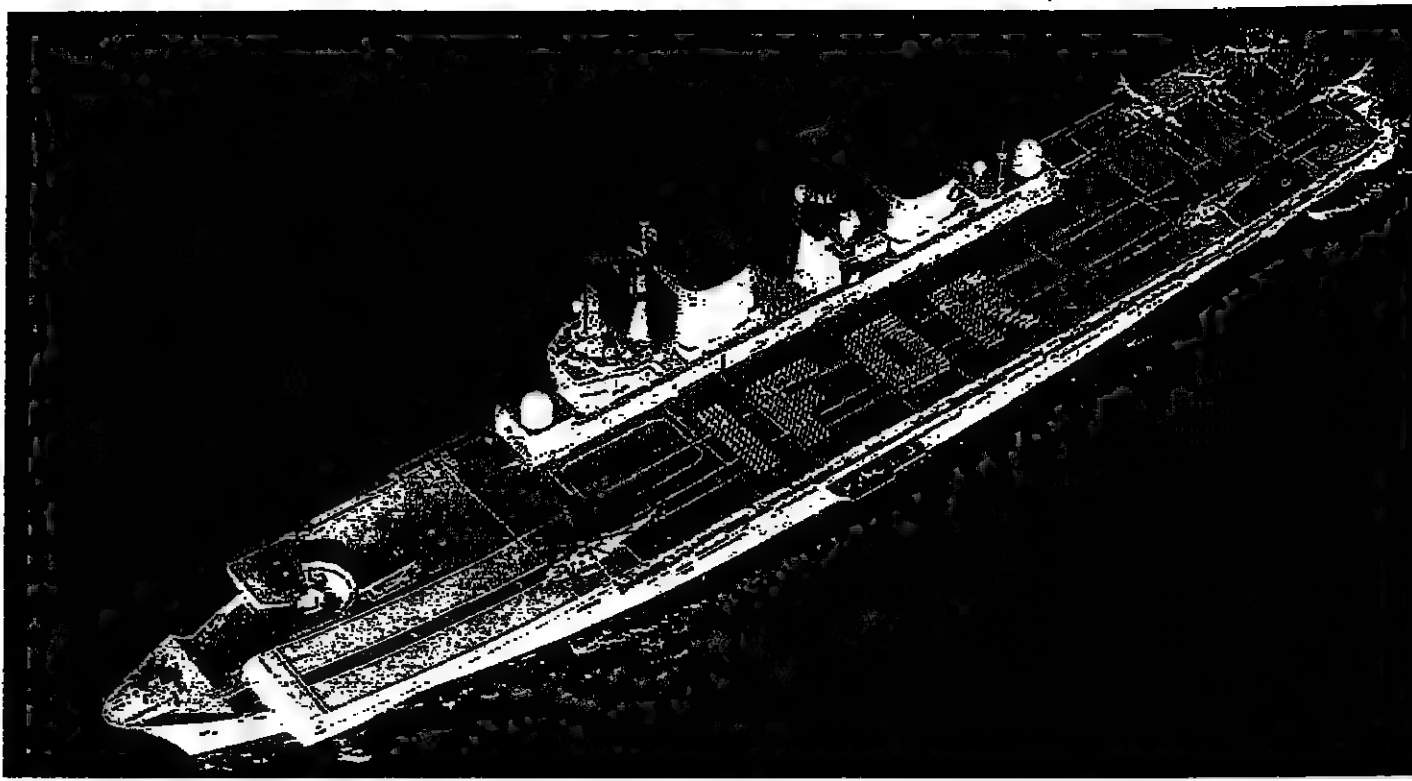
Louis Schweitzer, the chairman of Renault, the French car manufacturer, has been placed under formal legal investigation for alleged involvement in a telephone-tapping scandal. Page 7

Brazilian slavery

More than 4,000 people have been found by Brazilian authorities working in virtual slavery on five ranches outside the small town of Bauru. Page 10

Explosion warning

A leading Arab intellectual has delivered a warning that, despite the Israeli-Arab peace moves, the Middle East faces an explosion of social and economic discontent. Page 13



Five hundred sailors on HMS Illustrious off the coast of former Yugoslavia spell out the initials of Nato's Implementation Force

BUSINESS

Job cuts: AT&T, the American telecommunications giant, is taking a \$4 billion restructuring charge to pay for 40,000 job cuts over the next three years. The charge is thought to be the largest ever made by a company. Page 23

BT: Sir Peter Bonfield took up his post as chief executive warning that the company faces a "roller-coaster ride" this year. Page 23

Houses: Prices are still much lower than they were a year ago in spite of five consecutive monthly increases, according to the Halifax, Britain's largest mortgage lender. Page 23

Markets: The FT-SE 100 fell 1.4 to 3687.9. Sterling rose from 83.1 to 83.5 after rises from \$1.5505 to \$1.5570 and DM2.2191 to DM2.2340. Page 26

SPORT

Cricket: England were all out for 153 on the first day of the final Test in Cape Town, Allan Donald taking five wickets. South Africa were 44 for 2 at the close. Page 44

Motor racing: Jackie Stewart, Britain's most successful Formula One driver, is to return to grand prix racing at the head of his own team in 1997, aiming to challenge for the top prizes. Page 44

Football: The Old Firm game tonight, at Celtic Park, brings an opportunity to determine whether the gap between Celtic and Rangers is as great as ever. Page 44

Rugby union: Winning Park, second in fifth division north, were drawn at home to Wasps, beaten finalists, in the fifth round of the Pilkington Cup. Page 41

ARTS

Lookahead: From the big Cézanne retrospective at the Tate Gallery to the Who's Tommy in the West End of London, Times critics pick the hot tickets around Britain this winter. Page 31

Young at Art: Smithills School in Bolton reverberates to the sounds of five bands, three choirs, and a star and table ensemble. Page 32

Thinking big: As part of the millennium celebrations, Portsmouth and Gosport are planning the most spectacular piece of urban revival in Britain. Page 33

New York theatre: Patrick Stewart is one of the few men to have triumphed on a Broadway stage during a season in which women have been able to enjoy all the best parts. Page 33

TECHNIQUES

Lessons for life: A four-year-old's reaction to a marshmallow tells a lot about "emotional intelligence", is the latest US concept. Page 15

FASHION

Look of the year: The mood is pin-thin. The accent is on shape, colour and fabric. Page 14

MEDIA

Branded: Marketers will spend \$8.7 billion in 1996 with creations like the Andrex puppy. How consumer-friendly are they? Page 35

Seen it: Brenda Maddox puts her money on a few dead certainties for the year ahead. Page 35

HOME

Going, going, gone: What makes a house sell? The best-selling houses suggests some answers. Page 21

Hawaiian dream: A luxury beach house in Hawaii is slashed to £5.8 million and the agents hope to attract a British buyer. Page 21

THE PAPERS

Federal budget cuts are increasing the strain and one result is higher tuition at state colleges which are no longer as accessible for kids without money. — Washington Post

Tax breaks for bikers? Tax breaks for walking to work? It's nice to see liberals have begun to understand the dynamic effects of tax reductions. — Washington Times

Preview: Patricia Routledge becomes an OAP, and a private eye, in *Hetty Wainthropp Investigates* (BBC1, 9.30pm) Review: Lynne Truss enjoys a quirky quest for inventors and inventions. Page 43

The Arafat vote

The Chairman of the PLO has shown little taste so far for the spirit of multi-party democracy: complaints against him, which mount by the day, are made as fiercely by ordinary Palestinians themselves as by disconcerted foreign observers. Page 17

The Union gavel

Will they, won't they, will they, won't they bring down the Government of John Major? The Ulster Unionists want to keep everybody guessing: uncertainty is their strongest political weapon. Page 17

Frank Sagittarius

When Sinatra broke loose from the Tommy Dorsey Band in 1943 he not only asserted his independence, he also changed forever the status of the popular singer. Page 17

SIMON JENKINS

The Government found it hard enough to govern well with a small majority; this year will be worse. There is no reason for postponing an election beyond this summer — not even that Mr Major is more likely to win. He is not. Page 16

KEVIN MYERS

Nobody likes to say that the IRA ceasefire is over. But it is so. Four score years after Republicans began their war to remove the British from Ireland by force of arms, the ambition has not been achieved. But nor, most importantly, has it been abandoned. Page 16

SIMON BARNES

Michael Atherton has won a very decent number of his personal battles against overt opponents, such as Shane Warne, Courtney Walsh and Allan Donald, but Andy Atkinson, a groundsman, gets him every time. Page 41

Harry McLevy, union leader; Elsie Osborne, child psychologist; Vice-Admiral Peter Van Dyck, Chief of Staff of the Belgian Navy. Page 19

Emma Nicholson, courts martial; minority rights. Page 17

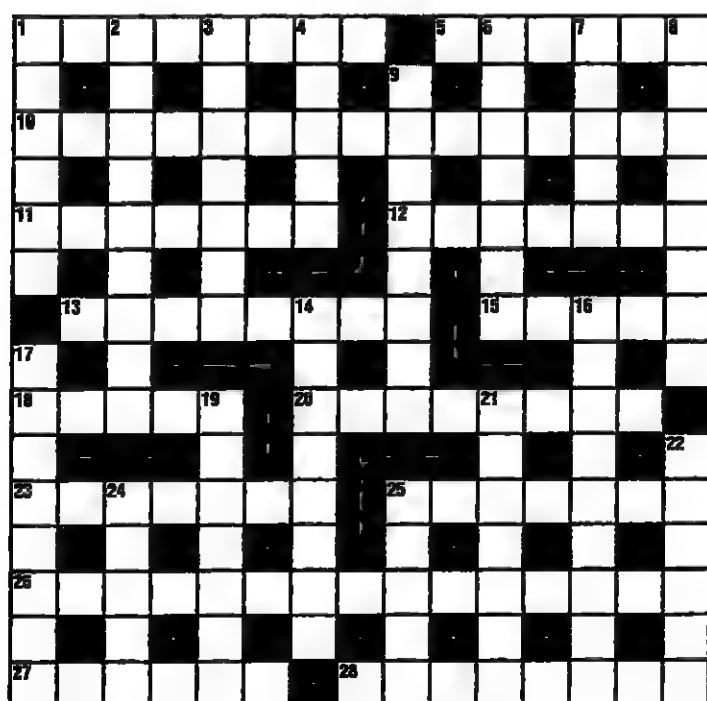
IN THE TIMES

FILMS
Juliette Binoche and Olivier Martinez (left) in *The Horseman on the Roof* and Brad Pitt in *Seven*

BOOKS
Roger Scruton on *The Myth of Political Correctness*



THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 20,054



- ACROSS**
- Joint in dreadfully poor taste? Not quite (3,5).
 - Man, for one, I malign with no hesitation (6).
 - Endless debating? It's proved to be impossible (9,6).
 - Road transport's still here — fish taken by old vessel (3-4).
 - Robot also needs switch I inserted (7).
 - Disorderly lout given a fright and banned (8).
 - Flat and smooth, so to speak (5).
 - Hold water that's a degree higher (3,2).
 - Killer charged in Spain (8).
 - Goddess encountered in the herd (7).
 - Opposition ends its reforms (7).
 - Countryman runs on board ship — behind Nelson's back, it appears (8,7).
- DOWN**
- Judge application to be rubbish (6).
 - Traveller who won't go as far as 17? (8).
 - Father goes on fast in church office (6).
 - Change direction in act on cycle (4,5).
 - Clothing for protection that's paramount? (7).
 - Did stomach take second lot of food? (5).
 - Rose was not invalid (5,2).
 - Don's familiar with a maiden I serve (5).
 - Heated argument heard before church, perhaps (4-4).
 - Hero's lamentation in tree (8).
 - Heads of television in conflict over plan for channel (8).
 - Satisfaction that one mentor is concealing (9).
 - He's prepared to forgive buddy about nothing (8).
 - Wretched disheartened type given religious sanctuary (7).
 - He rebelled against father so, a lamb going astray (7).
 - One who's never going to be a persistent competitor? (6).
 - Concept upwardly mobile male provided (5).
 - Hidden and keeping silent to track game (5).

Solution to Puzzle No 20,053

PICKWICK MODERN
O A I I O O B
S A N I T A T I O N S T A Y
T O H A A S N
W I N D O W D E S S I N G
A T T E T E N
R E G I T A R R O R D
A S S R O O
C O N T R O P S P Y R A M I D
R A A P H I E
B U C K L E D
C O N G R E G A T I O N A L
H O A T Z I A
M A I N G A S T R O N O M E
R T U I M A N E
A D O N I S R E L A S I E R

Times Two Crossword, page 44

TIMES WEATHERCAST

For the latest region by region forecast, 24 hours a day, dial 0891 500 followed by the appropriate code.

Region	Forecast
Greater London	701
Kent, Surrey, Sussex	702
Dorset, Hants & IOW	703
Devon & Cornwall	704
Wales, Glos, Avon, Somerset	705
Berks, Bucks, Oxon	706
Essex, Herts & Essex	707
Northants, Suffolk, Cambs	708
West Mid & Sh. Glos & Wilt	709
Stroud, Herefs & Wore	710
Central Midlands	711
East Midlands	712
Lincoln & Humbersides	713
Dyfed & Powys	714
Gloucestershire & Wilt	715
NW England	716
W & S Yorks & Dales	717
N England	718
Cumbria & Lake District	719
SW Scotland	720
W Central Scotland	721
Edin & Fife/Lythian & Borders	722
E Central Scotland	723
Grampian & E Highlands	724
NW Scotland	725
Canterbury & Kent	726
N Ireland	727

Weathercast is charged at 39p per minute (cheap rate) and 49p per minute at all other times.

AA ROADWATCH

For the latest AA traffic/roadworks information 24 hours a day, dial 0336 401 followed by the appropriate code.

Area	Code
London & M25	731
Essex/Herts/Berks/Bucks/Oxon	732
Kent/Surrey/Sussex/Hants	733
M25 London Orbital only	734
Manx and Irish roads	735
National motorways	736
West Country	737
Wales	738
Midlands	739
East Angles	740
North-west England	741
North-east England	742
Scotland	743
North Ireland	744
AA Roadwatch is charged at 39p per minute (cheap rate) and 49p per minute at all other times.	

HIGHEST & LOWEST

Yesterday: Highest day temp: Penzance, Cornwall, 13°C (55°F); lowest day max: Shroton, Hereford & Worcester, 3°C (37°F); highest rainfall: Aberdeen, 6.3mm; lowest rainfall: Falmouth, Cornwall, 0.2mm.

FORECAST

General: cloudy but some bright spells. England and Wales will have a grey, foggy morning in eastern parts and the murky conditions will be slow to clear during the day. In the west it will be brighter, still mainly cloudy but with the chance of some sun in north-west England and North Wales during the afternoon.

Scotland and Northern Ireland will be dry and cloudy at first but the cloud will start to break in parts of the Moray Firth and across central parts. Northern Ireland will cloud over during the afternoon, rain will follow and this damp weather will edge across the Western Isles by evening.

London, Central S. Central N. SE, NE, E England, E Anglia, E, W Midlands: fog and mist clearing, some light drizzle possible. Dry and overcast later. Wind light becoming moderate south-east. Max 6°C (43°F).

Channel Isles, SW, NW Eng-

AROUND BRITAIN YESTERDAY

24 hrs to 6 pm: b=brilliant; c=cloudy; d=drizzle; ds=dust storm; du=dust; f=fog; g=gale; h=halt; l=light rain; s=snow; st=st; t=t; w=wind; x=other.

Location	Temp	Wind	Pressure
Aberdeen	14	0.01	1015
London	10	0.01	1015
Manchester	10	0.01	1015
Cardiff	10	0.01	1015
Belfast	10	0.01	1015
Edinburgh	10	0.01	1015
Glasgow	10	0.01	1015
Sheffield	10	0.01	1015
Nottingham	10	0.01	1015
Leeds	10	0.01	1015
Bradford	10	0.01	1015
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ARTS 31-33

Is it wise for Portsmouth to get all lit up?



MEDIA 35

Steve Hewlett takes helm of bold new Panorama



SPORT 38-44

D'Oliveira feted on return to Cape Town

COMPUTER SKILLS THRIVE ON THE FARM
Secretarial 37

THE TIMES

BUSINESS EDITOR Lindsay Cook

WEDNESDAY JANUARY 3 1996

Forte pledges payout boost

By ERIC REGULY

FORTE raised the stakes in its battle to remain independent by unveiling plans yesterday for an £800 million share buyback and a commitment to raise the dividend by 20 per cent in each of the next three years.

The company said it would also increase the final dividend in the current year by 21 per cent, making a total of 8.5p, and distribute its majority stake in the Savoy Hotel group to Forte shareholders.

The defence package boosted Forte shares 12½p, to 343p, while shares of Granada, whose hostile offer is worth £3.2 billion, fell 3p, to 642p.

Granada has until Tuesday to revise its bid. The City, which was impressed by Forte's defence package, predicts that Granada will have to raise its offer by at least 10 per cent, to between 350p and 360p per share, if it hopes to win over institutional shareholders, such as Mercury Asset Management.

Forte's plan to repurchase 20 per cent of its share capital, designed to enhance earnings per share, is the centrepiece of the defence. At £800 million, which includes some £138 million in associated tax credits, it is considerably higher than the market was led to believe. The company, assuming Granada's takeover effort, fails, will purchase the shares at prices ranging from 330p to 400p. No premium will be offered; the buyback will be priced at the market value of the shares on the day of the offer. Shareholders, for example, would receive £70 for every 100 Forte shares they own in a buyback at 330p. Those who are eligible for tax credits would end up with £84. In each case, they would retain 79 Forte shares.



Sir Rocco Forte, second left, and his fellow board members, from left, Patrick Copeland, David Owen, Keith Hamill and Richard Power in London yesterday

Nigel Reed, an analyst at Paribas, said: "Investors now don't have to worry that the share price will drop away if the Granada bid fails because they can see it will be supported."

The share repurchase will take place in March or April, after Forte completes the sale of its roadside restaurants to Whitbread for a net £960 million. It will push gearing up to 45 per cent, from the 8 per cent level that would be achieved after the sale of the roadside restaurants.

The dividend rise comes as no surprise. Forte had been saying that the turnaround in the hotels sector, especially at the luxury end, would soon allow it to boost the yield on the shares. The dividend of 8.5p for the year to the end of January, however, is still well below the peak 9.9p dividend, paid in 1993. Raising it by 20 per cent in each year of the next three years would make an 18.36p gross dividend in 1998-99.

Forte has opted to distribute its Savoy stake to shareholders because it could not find a buyer willing to pay a premium for its investment. Although it owns 68 per cent of the equity, it lacks voting control. Forte expects to distribute 2.3 Savoy "A" shares for every 100 Forte shares owned, giving a value of about 23p for every Forte share.

Sir Rocco Forte, chairman and chief executive, said that Forte, shorn of its restaurants, would be a pure hotels company, poised for strong growth. "I'm very excited about this plan. This is really a prospectus for the future rather than a defence document."

Charles Allen, Granada's chief operating officer, dismissed the defence document as "headline-grabbing initiatives". He noted that Forte, after the completion of the asset sales and the share buyback, would, at best, achieve three times interest cover, against four times at a combined Granada-Forte. He said selling the restaurants was a mistake: "What you end up with is a luxury hotels group that would be highly susceptible to cyclical swings."

FORTE DEFENCE PACKAGE

- Share buyback of £800 million at prices between 330p and 400p.
- Increasing final dividend by 21 per cent, making 8.5p for the year.
- Commitment to raise dividend by 20 per cent each year for next three years.
- Distribution of Savoy interest, worth 23p per share, to Forte shareholders.
- Disposals, including £1 billion sale of roadside restaurants, to Whitbread.
- Shedding restaurants to create £24 million in annual cost savings.

AT&T set for \$4bn charge to pay for shake-up

FROM RICHARD THOMSON IN NEW YORK

AT&T, the US telecoms group, is taking a \$4 billion post-tax restructuring charge to pay for its planned split into three separate entities. The charge, thought to be the largest made by a company, will largely be used to pay for a massive programme of nearly 40,000 redundancies over the next three years.

The charge, which will be about \$6 billion before taxes, will cut AT&T's fourth-quarter profit by \$4 billion, or \$2.5 per share. Although the group has not yet announced its fourth-quarter figures, it is likely to plunge into loss because, for the first nine months of the year, it made \$2.82 billion, or \$1.77 per share. Total profits for 1994 were \$4.7 billion with revenues of \$75 billion.

Although AT&T is implementing a voluntary redundancy programme, the take-up has been small so that about 30,000 will be forced layoffs. Moreover, about 70 per cent of the job cuts will fall this year. AT&T currently employs about 300,000.

"The reduction of our workforce will be the most difficult and painful step we've had to take in this restructuring process," said Robert Allen, the chairman. "But I believe the reductions and other actions are absolutely essential if our businesses are to be competitive."

The cuts are part of a plan to cut AT&T's costs and improve efficiency by dividing it into three independent companies based on core activities.

The largest of the new companies will be the reorganised AT&T telephone group, while another will provide network and business and consumer technology and software. The third, AT&T Global Information Solutions, is a computer company.

The redundancies will cost at least \$2.6 billion, while a further \$1.7 billion will be spent on writing down assets.



Sir Peter Bonfield, the new chief executive of British Telecom, signing in on his first day at the company yesterday

BT chief foresees a 'roller-coaster ride'

By ERIC REGULY

SIR PETER BONFIELD yesterday took up his post as chief executive of British Telecom and gave a warning that the company faced a "roller-coaster ride" on the regulatory and competition fronts.

Sir Peter, 51, former chairman of ICL, Britain's biggest computer company, said: "We have the twin challenges of increasing competition and an increasingly uncertain regulatory environment. We shall meet both with renewed vigour."

Making peace with Ofcom, the telecoms regulator, is the biggest hurdle. BT and Don Cruickshank, Director-General of Telecommunications,

were at loggerheads throughout last year over issues ranging from the introduction of phone number portability to the extent of price controls on various services.

Relations hit rock-bottom last month when BT rejected proposals that would give Mr Cruickshank broad powers to investigate anti-competitive behaviour. A Monopolies and Mergers Commission inquiry on the issue appears inevitable.

Twelve years after privatisation, BT has lost only about 10 per cent of the telecoms market to competitors.

Tempus, page 26

C&M takeover surprise

By ROBERT MILLER

BUILDING society merger mania struck in an unexpected quarter yesterday, when the £200 million City & Swindon Building Society confirmed that it was to take over City & Metropolitan.

The move will trigger generous bonuses worth up to £2,500 for thousands of C&M members. The payouts are the first to be made under new regulations which allow societies to distribute up to 5 per cent of their assets. This enables them to match some of the bonuses paid in recent bank takeovers, while retaining their mutual status.

The £100 million City & Metropolitan has two branches

in the London borough of Bromley, another in north London and two in the West Country. Up to 15,000 C&M members, who had £100 in their accounts on both November 30, 1995 and April 18, 1996, will receive a £50 bonus and 5 per cent of the lower balance on those dates. The bonuses are subject to a £2,500 maximum on savings of £50,000. The society's borrowers will receive a 1 per cent discount on their mortgage rate.

Richard Payne, chief executive of Stroud & Swindon, which will retain its ranking as the 25th largest society, said there would be no job losses, although the Frome sub-

branch would be closed. He added: "We are not a predator and this is not a hostile action. It is very much an old-fashioned agreed merger between two building societies who believe in the long-term future of mutualism."

Mr Payne said he could not rule out other mergers, but added: "Stroud & Swindon would want to be the larger party to any such moves."

Among the larger societies considering their future business plans are the Woolwich, Alliance & Leicester - which also owns Girobank - Bristol & West and the Britannia.

City Diary, page 27

House prices remain lower than a year ago

By ROBERT MILLER

HOUSE prices are still much lower than they were a year ago in spite of five consecutive monthly increases, according to Britain's largest mortgage lender.

The Halifax, which has more than two million borrowers, will announce today that, on an annual basis, house prices are now 1.4 per cent lower, although they rose by 0.3 per cent in December. The standardised average house price in the UK is now £60,901. Prices paid by first-time buyers, regarded as a key to any sustainable recovery in housing market fortunes, fell

by 0.4 per cent in the final month of 1995. This leaves the annual inflation rate in this sector of the market 1.7 per cent lower than a year ago.

The Halifax said: "As consumer confidence improves in 1996 in line with growth in incomes, we expect house prices to strengthen slightly, growing by around 2 per cent. Recent falls in mortgage rates will also aid the market in the coming year and the number of house moves is likely to grow more quickly, increasing by around 10 per cent."

Bank lending, page 24

Warren comes out fighting against DTI

By JON ASHWORTH

FRANK WARREN, the boxing promoter, is vigorously resisting attempts by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) to ban him from serving as a company director. Mr Warren, 43, who yesterday acknowledged the four-year-old proceedings by the DTI, said that he was being taken to court on a "technicality" and would strongly contest proceedings when the case resumes next month.

Civil proceedings were brought against Mr Warren by the DTI in 1992, soon after the collapse of the London Arena, the Docklands sporting and entertainment complex. Price Waterhouse was appointed administrative receiver of Arena. Develop-

ments (Europe) in May 1991, and the venue closed later that year. It reopened under new ownership in 1994.

The case against Mr Warren moved to the courts in November 1995, but proceedings were adjourned after previously undiscovered documents came to light. According to Mr Warren, the DTI claimed to have inadvertently destroyed 165 boxes of documents, including accounts, relating to London Arena (Limited). However, the documents were subsequently found at Price Waterhouse, and proceedings were adjourned to allow time to consider the contents. Mr Warren and his defence team have spent weeks sifting through the papers.

Mr Warren said: "I was taken to court on a lot of technicalities, when I

was not in a position to defend myself. The DTI said it had lost all the accounts, then 165 boxes of documents were discovered. We are now going through the contents."

Park Nelson Thompson Quarrell, Mr Warren's solicitor, yesterday issued a statement on his behalf, saying that the proceedings by the DTI related to affairs of various companies before 1991. It said: "Mr Warren has defended the proceedings vigorously and filed lengthy affidavits explaining his efforts to protect the interest of all creditors, employees and shareholders. He will continue to defend the proceedings vigorously."

Mr Warren personally lost more than £3 million when the London Arena venture collapsed. He had also

personally guaranteed many debts of the companies, and faced the prospect of being made personally bankrupt for more than £5 million. The statement added: "This is not the case of an irresponsible director jeopardising the funds of creditors and not suffering a loss himself, but of a director with a very substantial personal financial commitment who worked extremely hard to protect the interests of all creditors and that investment."

Mr Warren's current business interests are not affected by the DTI move. He promotes the boxers Frank Bruno, Nigel Benn and Naseem Hamed.

Mr Warren faces bans of between two and 15 years under the Company Directors Disqualification Act, if court proceedings prove successful.

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BA takes off with Saatchis

British Airways launches an advertising campaign this week. The campaign is the first by M&C Saatchi since it snatched the account from the former Saatchi & Saatchi, now Cordiant.

An agreement not to poach clients or staff from Cordiant has expired, raising the prospect of fresh competition. John Fitzgerald, meanwhile, joins Cordiant as president and chief operating officer of Saatchi & Saatchi Advertising Worldwide from McCann-Erickson.

Outstanding vote

Water Hall Group shareholders will be asked to remove Edward Weiss, chairman of the quarry company, previously Siarmin, at an extraordinary meeting on January 25, and to appoint Anthony Smith as director. The move is led by Raschid Abdullah, a non-executive director, and his brothers Ahmed and Osman.

Link ends

Lord Hartwell, a member of the Berry family which formerly controlled the Telegraph newspapers, has left the board and ended his family's link with the group. His departure follows the family trust's sale of its remaining stake in the Telegraph plc. He was chairman and editor-in-chief from 1954 to 1987.

Drug passed

Zeneca Group, the pharmaceuticals company, said it had received approval from the US Food and Drug Administration for its Arimidex tablets for treating advanced breast cancer in postmenopausal women.



Ian Byatt, Director-General of Water Services, is one of the industry regulators affected by the new guidelines

Tough new guidelines for industry regulators

BY CHRISTINE BUCKLEY

TOUGHER guidelines for regulators over price-sensitive information were published yesterday, the result of a five-month inquiry triggered by the leaking last summer of the electricity regulator's price review.

Disclosures of Stephen Littlechild's price review in July caused chaos in the market and forced him to bring forward official publication of the details to stem further jumps in the share prices of electricity companies.

Then the Stock Exchange said it was deeply concerned about the leak of information. Its reaction came after a spat between the exchange and the regulator over when he had been warned that the information

was price-sensitive and should be disclosed immediately. It emerged that the review was not the secretive document the exchange would have wished, but rather one that was known to a large number of people in the industry before publication.

Yesterday the exchange, which has no direct power over the regulators but with whom it has been working on the guidelines, said that the new framework should ensure greater control over the issuing of price-sensitive information.

Richard Kilsby, director of market services, said they would "help to prevent disorderly markets and potential insider dealing in shares of regulated companies before

the official release of price-sensitive information by the regulators".

After the long consultation with the Stock Exchange the regulators have said that they will:

□ Minimise the period of pre-release of price-sensitive information;

□ Limit access to information on a need-to-know basis;

□ Advise other parties of the confidential nature of the information;

□ Notify the exchange and companies simultaneously;

□ Consult the exchange in the case of a leak and, if appropriate, release the information immediately.

But there is a get-out clause for the regulators in that the

exchange said it recognised that they may not always be able to stick "to the strict letter of these guidelines". It said that occasionally full compliance could lead to breaching a statutory obligation.

But it stressed that the new ground rules did not release the regulated companies from their present reporting duties.

"Nothing in these guidelines should be taken as absolving the regulated entities from their responsibilities in respect of price-sensitive information."

The guidelines, on which the exchange has worked with all the industry regulators as well as the Office of Fair Trading, will mirror the obligations that apply to listed companies.

Growth in M0 raises retail hopes

BY JANET BUSH
ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

BRITAIN'S narrow measure of money supply grew faster than expected in December, raising hopes that the Christmas shopping season went with a swing, but analysts said that yesterday's figures still leave the way open for lower base rates in the months ahead.

M0 money supply grew 1.2 per cent last month, compared with November, the biggest monthly rise since early 1994. This took the annual rate of growth of M0 to 5.9 per cent from 5.6 per cent.

It is notoriously difficult to seasonally adjust M0 money supply in December and several economists said that they expected the figure to be revised downwards when broad money figures are published in the middle of this month.

The strength of the figure may, however, suggest that retail spending may have been quite healthy in the run-up to Christmas. Andrew Cates, of UBS, said it added weight to anecdotal evidence showing a strong pick-up in consumer demand over Christmas.

He still believes that base rates will be cut again in coming months in response to further evidence of slower economic growth. M0 has been growing above the Government's 0 to 4 per cent monitoring range for nearly three years and yet base rates were still cut by a quarter point last month.

The new market in gilt-edged repos got off to a "quietly satisfactory" start, the Bank of England said. Euan Harkness, chairman of the Market Makers' Association, said that most trades were between professional investors, but predicted that the market would take off. "This is not an exotic product. It is going to finance the whole system."

Albert E Sharp buys Brown Shipley

ALBERT E Sharp is set to become the UK's largest independent stockbroker after paying Guinness Peat £7 million for Brown Shipley, its private client stockbroking and personal equity plan arm. Guinness Peat, which is the UK investment vehicle of Sir Ron Brierley, the New Zealand entrepreneur, will receive a further £400,000 by October 31 for the deal. The value of the net assets transferred to Albert E Sharp, which manages £2 billion for private investors, pension funds and charities, was £3.8 million.

Guinness Peat said yesterday that the Brown Shipley money would be added to the group's £15 million plus cash pile and used "to make strategic investments in other companies and situations". Trevor Cooke, chief executive of Brown Shipley Stockbroking, which also manages £2 billion, said: "Together, Brown Shipley and Albert E Sharp will be able to meet the challenges presented to our clients by an international market place driven increasingly by high technology."

East Midlands pays out

CUSTOMERS of East Midlands Electricity, who are about to gain discounts on their bills from the National Grid sales, will receive a top-up payout after their supplier said it had benefited from low power prices. East Midlands, one of the few regional electricity companies not to have had a takeover bid, is to pay customers a one-off £6, to accompany bills issued now. It will coincide with a £54.60 rebate for all electricity users after the Grid flotation last month. The company said it was able to make its payment after a fall in power costs and after results of reorganising its supply business had begun to feed through.

Bid for Gambro shares

INCENTIVE, the investment arm of Sweden's Wallenberg industrial holding company, has bid Kr10.3 billion (£1 billion) for the shares that it does not already own in Gambro, the medical technology group. Incentive already owns 42 per cent of the share capital and 58 per cent of the votes in Gambro. Gambro is based in the south of Sweden and its biggest area of business is dialysis. Incentive also said it had reached agreement to buy the Gambro shares held by the Crafoord foundation and the Crafoord family. The foundation is the second-largest shareholder in Gambro after Incentive.

Kmart extends credit

KMART, the world's second biggest retailer, has secured a payment extension on \$300 million of debt, staving off the threat of bankruptcy. Although the credit extension is not finalised, Kmart said that all 30 banks in the lending syndicate had signed the agreement. Kmart had borrowed the money to buy goods for the Christmas season. The discount retailer has been bedevilled by falling revenues and soaring debts, which now amount to \$2.7 billion, most of which is repayable next year. The \$300 million extension is the first stage in Kmart's campaign to reschedule all of its debt.

Wales wins 8,000 jobs

THE Welsh Development Agency, which celebrated its 30th anniversary yesterday, has attracted almost 8,000 jobs to Wales this financial year. That is a 60 per cent improvement on 1994-95 and indicates that the agency is likely to exceed this year's target of 10,000 jobs from inward investment. Although the WDA has been in operation since 1976, it assumed responsibility for inward investment only in 1983. Since then, it has attracted 1,114 projects from across the world. These projects represent a capital investment of £5.58 billion in Wales, and have created or safeguarded 110,000 jobs.

SHV Calor in \$62m deal

CALOR GROUP, the British bottled gas company, said SHV Calor Brazil, its associate company, had bought 49 per cent of Superagas Distribuidora de Gas of Brazil for \$62 million. The deal secures day-to-day management of the company and 50 per cent of its voting shares. SHV Calor is a joint venture between Calor and SHV Energy, of The Netherlands. Superagas is Brazil's fourth-largest distributor of liquefied petroleum gas and supplies more than 24 million people and 800,000 tonnes of bottled gas a year. It has 14 per cent of the Brazilian market and 3,800 workers.

TOURIST RATES

	Bank	Bank
Australia \$	2.17	2.01
Austria Sch	16.81	15.11
Belgium F	48.54	44.24
Canada C	2.21	2.18
Cyprus Cyp	0.748	0.891
Denmark Kr	9.20	8.40
Finland Mk	7.58	7.08
France F	7.99	7.34
Germany DM	2.37	2.27
Greece Dr	367.05	382.00
Hong Kong H	12.68	11.58
Italy Lit	2,400	4,500
Israel Sh	2,551.00	2,596.00
Japan Yen	173.80	157.00
Malta	0.562	0.597
Netherlands Gld	2.638	2.406
New Zealand \$	1.71	1.67
Norway Kr	10.37	9.67
Portugal Esc	242.50	224.00
S. Africa R	16.50	15.37
Spain Ptas	164.50	181.00
Sweden Kr	10.98	10.08
Switzerland F	1.91	1.79
Turkey Lira	16.50	8,828.00
USA \$	1.50	1.50

Rates for small denomination notes only as supplied by Barclays Bank PLC. Different rates apply to travellers' cheques. Rates as at close of trading yesterday.

Banks offer sign of housing recovery

BY ROBERT MILLER

FURTHER signs of a tentative recovery in the home loans market were offered yesterday by nine of the UK's 20 largest mortgage lenders.

Figures from the British Bankers' Association (BBA) show that net mortgage lending by the leading banks rose by nearly 7 per cent to £2.1 billion in November. However, the number of new approvals fell 10 per cent to 31,224.

The BBA's latest figures suggested a "modest improvement" in the outlook for the housing market in 1996, said the association. Tim Sweeney, director-general of the BBA,

said: "With the building societies reporting a sharp increase in net advances in November, the lending data for the month add support to the view that the new year may see a modest improvement in the housing market." He said the fall in approvals since October was probably partly seasonal.

Data already published by the Building Societies Association (BSA), showing that net mortgage advances rose by £580 million in November to £385 million, suggest that building societies are gaining a bigger share of the home loans market at the expense of banks.



Kevin Maxwell: denial

Maxwell trial resumes after four-week break

BY JON ASHWORTH

JURORS in the Maxwell trial return to the Central Criminal Court today, when Lord Justice Phillips is due to begin his summing-up. The trial was adjourned on December 6 — the 16th day of the trial — when the judge sent jurors off for a four-week break.

Lord Justice Phillips agreed to the break after the seven women and five men told him they would feel under pressure if they were sent out to consider their verdicts before Christmas. The judge had proposed to begin summing up in mid-December. He was eager to prevent too much

time elapsing between counsel's closing speeches and the jurors considering their verdict. The judge said the need to avoid feeling under pressure outweighed these factors.

Kevin Maxwell, 36, denies conspiring with his father, the late Robert Maxwell, to defraud pensioners of shares worth £100 million in Scitex Corporation, an Israeli company. With his brother, Ian, 39, and Larry Trachtenberg, 42, a former Maxwell adviser, he denies conspiring to defraud pensioners of £22 million of shares in Teva Pharmaceutical Industries.

LEGAL & PUBLIC NOTICES

LEGAL NOTICES

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Notice is hereby given, pursuant to the provisions of the Companies Act 1985, that the following particulars of the proposed voluntary arrangement of the above company, as set out in the Statement of Affairs, have been approved by the creditors of the company at a meeting held on 27th December 1995, and that the arrangement has been approved by the court on 27th December 1995. The arrangement is set out in the Statement of Affairs, which is available for inspection at the offices of the company, 100, Broad Street, London, W1P 3JF, and at the offices of the company's liquidator, Messrs. PricewaterhouseCoopers, 15, Abchurch Lane, London, EC4N 3DF, from 9.00 am to 5.00 pm on any business day. The arrangement is set out in the Statement of Affairs, which is available for inspection at the offices of the company, 100, Broad Street, London, W1P 3JF, and at the offices of the company's liquidator, Messrs. PricewaterhouseCoopers, 15, Abchurch Lane, London, EC4N 3DF, from 9.00 am to 5.00 pm on any business day.

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Lloyds Bank Interest Rates for Business Customers

LLOYDS BANK BASE RATE

Effective from 13 December 1995

6.50% per annum

LOANS

	% Per Month	Eqv. Annual Rate %
Business Loan Standard and Farm Business Loan Standard	1.00	12.00
Business Loan Preferential and Farm Business Loan Preferential	0.83	9.96
Small Business Loan Standard	1.10	13.20 (APR 14.0)*
Small Business Loan and Farm Small Business Loan	1.00	12.00 (APR 12.6)*

*The APR does not take into account any additional charges (eg arrangement fees/ security charges) - monthly interest which may be applicable

OVERDRAFTS

Band	% Per Month	Eqv. Annual Rate %
A (and Standard)	0.97	11.64
B	0.88	10.56
C	0.80	9.60
Unauthorized	2.00	24.00

MORTGAGES

Band	% Per Month	Eqv. Annual Rate %
A	1.00	12.00
B and C	0.83	9.96

SAVINGS ACCOUNTS

Premier Interest Account†	Gross Rate %	Gross CAR %
£250,000+	5.35	5.48
£100,000+	5.05	5.17
£25,000+	4.85	4.75
£10,000+	4.35	4.44

†Net interest is paid on balance in below £250,000

Clienta Call Account	Half Yearly Option		Monthly Option	
	Gross Rate %	Gross CAR %	Gross Rate %	Gross CAR %
£1,000,000+	4.60	4.65	4.56	4.66
£ 100,000+	4.40	4.45	4.36	4.45
£ 10,000+	3.90	3.94	3.87	3.94
£ 2,500+	3.35	3.38	3.33	3.38
Below £2,500	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00

Business Call Account	Gross Rate %	Gross CAR %
£250,000+	3.90	3.97
£ 100,000+	3.60	3.71
£ 25,000+	3.45	3.51
£ 1,000+	3.15	3.20
Below £1,000	2.75	2.78

Deposit Account	Half Yearly Option		Monthly Option	
	Gross Rate %	Gross CAR %	Gross Rate %	Gross CAR %
£1+	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25

Interest rates may vary from time to time. This notice lists current rates.

Gross Rate - the annual interest rate.

Gross CAR - compounded annual rate when full monthly or half-yearly interest payments

*These rates of interest apply with effect from 3 January 1996

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□ Defence package tests Granada's grit □ Gas in the doghouse again □ Bank studies the Leeson effect

Forte's moonlight flit

□ SIR ROCCO wants to win this one, for reasons that are not entirely commercial and no matter how much of his shareholders' money it costs. It may have been designed to take the market unawares, but Forte's final throw in the game has a hint of desperation.

That said, it will probably suffice. Readers of the Sunday papers, that twilight world where the true business of contested takeover deals is increasingly conducted, learned two things over the holiday weekend. They learned to expect £500 million in goodies for Forte shareholders, and they understood that Granada was hesitating over a 10 per cent jump in the price it was prepared to pay.

The first turns out, surprise, surprise, to be a wild underestimate. The second — well, time will tell if it is the same double-bluff. A 10 per cent rise would put an increased offer somewhere in the 360p a share area — some 20p below best City estimates, but analysts are greedy creatures and best kept on short rations.

The problem for Gerry Robinson at Granada is that 360p is not enough to win, but he cannot afford much more because Forte does not offer the sort of obvious

savings available from Pearson, the bid he should have made. The only way he might, and not stretch the patience of his shareholders, is by realising the £670 million Granada's holding in BSkyB is currently worth: a refusal to do so suggests Mr Robinson thinks that a better long-term investment than Forte, which is a telling revelation.

The Forte defence gives an idea just what kind of beast would be left after the disposals and the shares buy-back. There is talk of selling the freeholds of some luxury hotels and operating them as management contracts. This could push gearing down well below the 35 per cent the group regards as a minimum; along with the expected recovery in the hotels sector, it would also raise interest cover way above a rather uncomfortable 4 times' profits based on next year's forecasts.

The betting must be that Granada will not go sufficiently higher to win; Forte would be left the only pure luxury hotels play

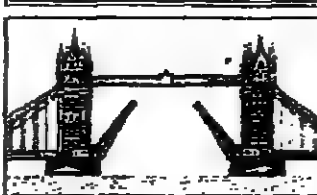
on the London stock market and would always command some bid premium as a result.

It would leave Sir Rocco, second generation Forte, in charge of a sadly shrunken business, which is no bad thing, because the rest of the defence package is mere window-dressing, dividend rises that would have taken place anyway and a trio of internal board appointments. Perhaps Sir Rocco will at length put a cap on this Granada-inspired shake-up and bring in that chief executive to share the top role at Forte.

Gas guzzlers

□ IT HAS not been a good Christmas for utilities. Hydro Electric in Scotland was caught out by the blizzards, and thousands of homes are now without water, after the thaw. British Gas, for a split second, was in danger of losing its hard-won reputation as Britain's most

PENNINGTON



hated privatised business. Only for a second, though. The great minds at the Rivermill House head office were not going to deprive the company of its proper place at the top of the public hate-list.

Readers of these pages will not be too shocked by the news that British Gas as a matter of course evades its responsibilities under its disgracefully overpriced ServiceCare contracts, because they read it here first. But one or two non-readers that their holiday comprehensively ruined because they foolishly chose to rely on those contracts.

These allow that if your heat-

ing fails, it will be fixed by a dedicated team of engineers on the same day — except when the weather is cold, there is an "R" in the month, or any number of other excuses occur that may take the company's fancy.

The weasel words in the contract allow British Gas to refuse to carry out the work on time, if it is inconvenient or too many other consumers require the same service. The company is wittingly about compensation payments, but this is in reality the insurers' dream, an insurance contract on which payment is merely optional.

British Gas says the lack of engineers this year has nothing to do with the 25,000 people it has sacked over the past decade. Pathetic. British Gas says that cold weather in November and December is not normal, so releasing it from obligations for which its customers have already paid. Beyond pathetic.

British Gas says the only real worth of the contracts, which bind the company to provide

immediate, note immediate, service, is that without such contracts they may not do the work at all. Ever. Beyond words. Welcome back where you belong, at the top of the list.

Gamble now, get paid later

□ TEN months after the collapse of Barings, Nick Leeson is settling down to his sentence. Back home, Margaret Bray of the London School of Economics is going round other City institutions, trying to discover how the way their traders are paid affects their attitudes to risk-taking. Her client is the Bank of England.

The banking regulator wants to round out its knowledge of how far traders depend on betting their firms' money in the derivatives markets to buy themselves a decent cup of tea — and what effect this is likely to have on the way markets behave. About time too.

Most of us could probably

hazard a rough guess: the bonus is all. That assessment might also include the obvious doubt whether, in this case, the hidden hand of free markets manages to translate personal self-interest into anything remotely useful to the economy.

The Bank insists that it has no intention of laying down how people should be paid. Certainly not. There are subtler ways. Any regulator worth its salt will ensure that banks that expect traders to earn most of their income from profit-related bonuses have such a high capital requirement imposed on them to allow for the risk that they will rapidly change their ways.

Left-hand drive

□ JUST consider: the head of Rover is arrested and charged with phone-tapping — but the news takes two months to leak out. It would be inconceivable in Britain; it happened in France, if you substitute Rover with Renault and the former politician now running the French car-maker, France has some of the most restrictive privacy laws in the free world; there, the scandals that are the staple of the financial pages in Britain would simply have been suppressed.

Sainsbury's promotion rekindles price war fear

BY SARAH BAGNALL

J SAINSBURY has rekindled fears of a price war among food retailers by launching a promotion, which, it claims, saves customers £20 on a typical weekly shopping basket of £70. The move follows last Friday's announcement by Iceland, the frozen food retailer, that it was cutting prices of numerous lines by up to 50 per cent.

The January Savers promotion by Sainsbury involves a combination of price cuts and "buy-one-get-one-free" offers on a range of more than 200 products such as bread, potatoes, coffee, shampoo and chickens. The promotion covers own-label products and brand names.

Sainsbury, chaired by David Sainsbury, saw shares fall 2p to 391p as some analysts expressed concern that the move could provoke retaliation from rival retailers. Tony MacNeary, an analyst at



David Sainsbury, chairman, saw shares fall yesterday

NatWest Securities, said: "I can't imagine the competition doing absolutely nothing in response to this. The question is just the scale of their response."

However, both Asda and Tesco were quick to quash any

speculation that they would launch a counter-offensive. An Asda spokesman said: "We see this as short-term price gimmickry. We believe in giving our customers permanently low prices, not just in January, which we do already."

A Tesco spokesman said: "This is a hyped-up price promotion which is completely hollow. We offer customers a price promotion every month, not just in January. If you are going to do a special price promotion, then why not make it special?"

Sainsbury claimed it ran similar price promotions every January, but this year the offer covered a wider range of everyday items and the price cuts were more substantial. Kevin McCarten, Sainsbury marketing director, said: "We are not trying to reopen a price war. This is a sales promotion."

The promotion is backed up by heavy in-store promotion and newspaper advertising. As a result, the advertising cost is equal to that incurred in the first quarter of 1995, which is estimated by analysts to be about £3.6 million.

Times, page 26

Danes may cut stake in Rentokil

BY PHILIP PANGALOR

SOPHUS BERENDSEN, the Danish holding company, has hinted that it may be ready to reduce its 52 per cent stake in Rentokil, the UK-based plants to pest control company (Alasdair Murray writes).

Haas Werdelin, chief executive of Sophus, said that the company might relinquish its majority stake if given guarantees that Rentokil's 20 per cent annual profit rise would be maintained, although he added that there were no immediate plans for a sell-off.

Clive Thompson, Rentokil chief executive, has set a target of a 20 per cent rise in earnings each year. The company posted half-year profits in 1995 of £99 million, 23 per cent up on the previous year. However, there has been unease over the high-growth strategy. Rentokil shares yesterday slipped 4p, to 331p.

Test contract keeps Capita in fast lane

CAPITA GROUP, the fast-growing company specialising in providing management services to the public sector and utilities, has won a lucrative contract to run the written theory test for learner drivers from July 1. The written driving tests will bring the UK into line with other EU countries.

Capita has won the contract through DriveSafe, a new joint venture company owned by Capita and JHP Group, a private training company based in Coventry.

The DriveSafe contract is expected to generate revenues of up to £70 million and will last up to five years. The contract will be overseen by the Driving Standards Agency (DSA), the organisation responsible for all car, motorcycle, bus and lorry practical driving tests. The DSA will also be responsible for development and updating of theory test question banks and for related publications.

DriveSafe will develop a

national network of test centres in all main areas of population and will run frequent test sessions to suit candidates' needs. Paul Pindar, Capita's managing director, said there will be 132 centres around the country.

DriveSafe is expected to supervise between 1 and 1.2 million learner drivers each year as they sit the new compulsory test, which for cars and motorcycles will consist of 35 multiple-choice questions based on the Highway Code and road safety.

The company will book tests, collect fees, print test papers, provide premises for tests, invigilate the tests and mark the papers. The fee for the written test is expected to be between £13 and £15.

Mr Pindar said: "We've now got a very broadly based business that is not just based on local government."

The shares rose 8p to 293p.

Times, page 26

Booker sells division to Unigate

BY SARAH BAGNALL

BOOKER, the UK's largest cash-and-carry operator, continues to refocus on its core activities by pulling out of the bacon business with the sale of its Lovell division to Unigate for £20.25 million.

The news came as Booker announced "satisfactory" sales over the Christmas period and a 13 per cent rise in group sales for the year to December 31. Like-for-like sales advanced 6.5 per cent.

Charles Bowen, Booker chief executive, said: "This sale marks our exit from the bacon and pork businesses at a satisfactory price. With our increasing focus on food distribution, fish processing and agribusiness, it is more appropriate that they join Unigate." Lovell's pre-tax profits for the year to December 31 fell to an undisclosed level (£2.1 million). Sales in the year to December 31, 1994, reached £83.7 million. Booker's shares rose 7p to 365p.

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Barclays	314	+0.3	Barclays	314	+0.3	Barclays	314	+0.3
Bell	20	+0.5	Bell	20	+0.5	Bell	20	+0.5
Bombardier	20	+0.5	Bombardier	20	+0.5	Bombardier	20	+0.5
Bright	20	+0.5	Bright	20	+0.5	Bright	20	+0.5
BSI	20	+0.5	BSI	20	+0.5	BSI	20	+0.5
CBS	20	+0.5	CBS	20	+0.5	CBS	20	+0.5
CEC	20	+0.5	CEC	20	+0.5	CEC	20	+0.5
CNA	20	+0.5	CNA	20	+0.5	CNA	20	+0.5
CP	20	+0.5	CP	20	+0.5	CP	20	+0.5
CPA	20	+0.5	CPA	20	+0.5	CPA	20	+0.5
CPB	20	+0.5	CPB	20	+0.5	CPB	20	+0.5
CPD	20	+0.5	CPD	20	+0.5	CPD	20	+0.5
CPH	20	+0.5	CPH	20	+0.5	CPH	20	+0.5
CPJ	20	+0.5	CPJ	20	+0.5	CPJ	20	+0.5
CPK	20	+0.5	CPK	20	+0.5	CPK	20	+0.5
CPM	20	+0.5	CPM	20	+0.5	CPM	20	+0.5
CPN	20	+0.5	CPN	20	+0.5	CPN	20	+0.5
CPQ	20	+0.5	CPQ	20	+0.5	CPQ	20	+0.5
CPR	20	+0.5	CPR	20	+0.5	CPR	20	+0.5
CPS	20	+0.5	CPS	20	+0.5	CPS	20	+0.5
CPV	20	+0.5	CPV	20	+0.5	CPV	20	+0.5
CPW	20	+0.5	CPW	20	+0.5	CPW	20	+0.5
CPX	20	+0.5	CPX	20	+0.5	CPX	20	+0.5
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STOCK MARKET

MICHAEL CLARK

Political uncertainties unsettle share prices

AN OPENING rise on Wall Street brought some relief to the London stock market where investors were again submerging by political uncertainties.

News of the latest Conservative Party election has raised the possibility of an early general election, in spite of reassurances to the contrary by John Major. As a result, the firm start to trading that many brokers had forecast at the close of business on the last day of 1995 failed to materialise.

The FT-SE 100 index saw an early seven-point lead wiped out by mid-morning was nursing a fall of 22 points. As one leading broker pointed out: "The market can deal with volatility, but what it cannot tolerate is uncertainty. All this talk of an early general election is likely to hang like a cloud over things for some time to come."

In the event, the index put in a late burst to finish the session just 1.4 down at 3,087.9. But trading remained thin and this was reflected in the turnover of shares with fewer than 500 million shares changing hands.

Early attention focused on Fortis, up 12p at 343p, after publication of its final defence document. This proved to be harder hitting than many brokers had expected, containing, among other things, a £3.5 billion valuation of its hotel chain. That compares with the bid from Granada valuing the whole company at £3.2 billion.

Granada has until next Tuesday to respond. City speculators are convinced that Granada will now have to increase its terms to win the day. The group maintains that it can raise profits at Fortis by £100 million simply by shedding most of the 300 jobs at its head office. It also envisaged benefits from increased food and drink buying power. Granada finished 3p easier at 642p.

Ladbroke, the betting and leisure group which owns the Inter-Continental chain of hotels outside the US, jumped 10p to 156p, reflecting the Fortis valuation. Ladbroke shares were unsettled last week by reports that Bass was ready to bid, instead, for rival Vaux. This countered months of speculation that Ladbroke was the real target. In fact, most followers of the sector remain convinced that Lad-



Telecom groups enjoyed mixed fortunes over Christmas

broke is a bid target. Bass finished all square at 719p, while Vaux fell 12p to 270p.

The first day's trading in the new year also focused the bid spotlight on the insurance brokers. This is a sector which is expected to undergo a rapid change in 1996 that could result in a number of takeovers and mergers.

Induschem, up 1p at 250p,

of London's other big broking outfits such as Sedgwick, 6p dearer at 127p, or Willis Corroon, 3p stronger at 140p. Willis Corroon has come up from a low of 119p recently.

Others to go better in the sector include C.E. Heath, 5p to 154p, JIB Group, 2p to 105p, and Nelson Hurst, 4p to 150p.

BT ran in profit-taking in

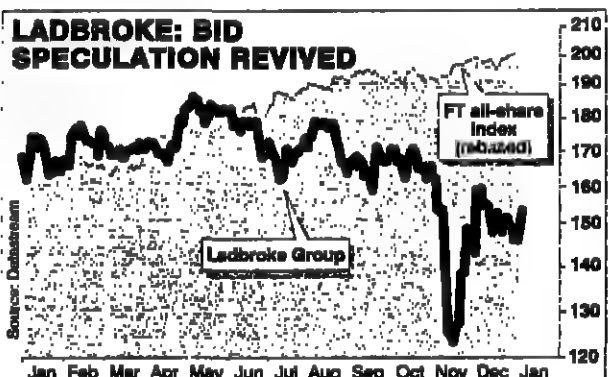
Whitbread's £1.05 billion agreement to buy Fortis's roadside operations, including Travelodge, has attracted the support of Goldman Sachs. The US securities house says that the acquisition should have a meaningful impact on long-term growth prospects. The shares rose 12p to 692p.

recently indicated that it had considered selling its Bain Hogg insurance arm, but would now be floating the business off separately.

Aon, the US life insurer, had originally been tipped as a buyer for Hogg Bain and has increased speculation by selling two of its life insurance operations for \$1.2 billion. Dealers said this would enable it to make a move for one

of the wake of last week's strong gains, ending 2p easier at 352p. The group reported a 10 per cent increase to 47 million in domestic and overseas calls on Christmas Day.

It had been hoped that similar good news would be reported by Vodafone, the mobile phone operator, but none was forthcoming. In fact, the shares retreated 4p to 220p after reporting a lower



than expected number of new subscribers during December. The final outcome of 143,000 was short of City forecasts ranging from 150,000 to 170,000. Brokers said the figures confirmed recent speculation about a slowdown in new subscriber numbers.

A number of companies responded positively to new year share tips, including Burton Group, whose *Times* paper for 1996. The shares finished 3p better at 137p.

Far from showing signs of abating after the Christmas spending spree, the high street food price war appears to be hotting up. J. Sainsbury has led the latest salvo by cutting prices on 200 lines. The shares edged 2p to 391p. This is the third year in a row that the group has undertaken a round of price cuts at the start of the year.

Brokers say the latest move is designed to win back market share from Tesco, up 5p at 302p. Asda, 1p dearer at 111p, and Argill, the Sainsbury supermarket chain, 3p off at 338p.

One of the best gains of the day was seen in Zergo, the computer consultancy specialist, where the price leapt 8p to 250p in thin trading on the Alternative Investment Market.

Brookbank returned from suspension 4p higher at 290p after completion of the Mid Ocean deal. Under the terms of the deal, Mid Ocean plans to invest £50 million in Brookbank's underwriting operations. It has also given an undertaking to launch a full bid for the company within a year of September 1, 1996.

■ **GILT-EDGED:** Prices spent a volatile session undermined by political uncertainties. But a late rally inspired by the US purchasing managers index enabled the market to close above its worst of the day.

In the futures pit, the March series of the long gilt ended £2.12 lower at £101.10 in thin trading that saw 42,000 contracts completed. In the cash market, benchmark Treasury 8 per cent 2013 dropped £2.12 to £102.16, while at the shorter end, Treasury 8 per cent 2000 finished £1.10 down at £104.73.

■ **NEW YORK:** Wall Street volumes were at normal levels as the Dow Jones industrial average put on 32.15 points to stand at 5,149.27 at midday.

MAJOR INDICES

New York (midday):
Dow Jones 5149.27 (+32.15)
S&P Composite 117.24 (+1.31)

Tokyo:
Nikkei Average Closed
1803.78 (+1.22)

Hong Kong:
Hang Seng 10206.87 (+131.48)

Amsterdam:
EEX Index 495.24 (+23.40)

Sydney:
All Ordinaries 2226.4 (+23.40)

Frankfurt:
DAX 2284.86 (+30.98)

Singapore:
Straits 2258.07 (+6.47)

Brussels:
General 8469.40 (+67.72)

Paris:
CAC-40 1908.38 (+36.41)

Zurich:
S&A Geni Closed

London:
FT 30 2696.7 (+6.0)
FT 100 3067.9 (+1.4)
FTSE Mid 200 4036.9 (+15.4)
FTSE-A 350 1831.6 (+1.2)
FTSE Eurotrack 100 1509.8 (+16.39)
FT All-Share 1908.86 (+0.47)
FT Non Financials 1908.86 (+0.47)
FT Fixed Interest 114.62 (+0.73)
FT Govt Secs 95.52 (+0.42)
Barrons 2799
SEAO Volume 451.3m
US (Datastream) 1865.0 (+0.36)
USS 1570.1 (+0.068)
German Mark 2.3361 (+0.0149)
Exchange Index 83.5 (+0.4)
Bank of England official close (1995)
EBSR 1.781
EBSR 1.781
XPT 149.8 Nov (3.19) Jan 1997-100
RPLX 149.8 Nov (2.99) Jan 1997-100

RECENT ISSUES

Cash Converters Int'l	25	+	1
Century	118	+	1
Com de Part Fin	510	+	1
Corworth (150)	151	+	1
Cox Insurance	112	+	1
Crown Products	75	+	1
Dmarek	53	+	1
Finch Tech Tst (100)	103	+	1
Goathead (200)	200	+	1
Mann & O'Shea	23	+	1
National Grid (204)	100	+	1
Northern Petroleum	75	+	1
Nitin Petrol	8	+	1
Per City	395	+	13
Polymark Pharms	129	+	4
Recreation Plus	100	+	1
Rushmore Wynne	3	+	1
Unicom Ind (133)	138	+	1
Vikrex	253	+	3
Viewline	130	+	1
Wilmington	67	+	1

RIGHTS ISSUES

Dinec Hse n/p (110p)	1
Melrose n/p (24)	0
SWP Group n/p (2)	1
Westbury n/p (150)	22

MAJOR CHANGES

FINES:	
Pressac	157p (+11p)
ADT	945p (+82p)
Photobank	248p (+22p)
Parity	184p (+9p)
Recal Elect	297p (+12p)
Courtauld Text	388p (+12p)
Barclays	736p (+19p)
Sage	335p (+10p)
Stand Char	581p (+15p)
Allied Dom	537p (+12p)
Prudential	424p (+9p)
RALLIS:	
Sheldiag	151p (+11p)
Filtronic Com	483p (+33p)
Kellogg Ind	578p (+30p)
Brooks Elec	274p (+10p)
GEI	347p (+5p)
Bowthorpe	411p (+6p)
Laporte	682p (+12p)
Glaxo Wellcome	904p (+11p)
Gen Accident	5017p (+5p)

Closing Prices Page 28

TEMPUS

Unhappy New Year

J. SAINSBURY is in a pickle. Tagged the lost sheep of the food retailing sector, the supermarket group is struggling to regain its foothold. The new year price promotion may be the start of the attempt to get out of the mire by communicating more successfully its pricing position to customers. Alternatively, it may be an indication of the malaise suffered by Britain's biggest retailer.

In November, Sainsbury disclosed that it was investing in sales growth at the expense of the gross margin and, as a result, expected a decline of 50 basis points in the second half. However, there is growing concern that this investment has failed to pay off.

Hence, the cynics argue, the price promotion, which also raises the spectre of renewed price wars among food retailers.

The significant advances in like-for-like sales

announced in recent months by its rivals are seen to be at the expense of Sainsbury. Figures from AGB yesterday show Sainsbury's market share in the four weeks to December 17 at 19.4 per cent, down 1.2 percentage points. In contrast, Tesco, Asda and Sainsbury all lifted their market shares. A clearer picture will emerge on January 26, when Sainsbury is to release a trading statement.

Over the longer term, a lot of the retailer's future success rests on the shoulders of Kevin McCarten, who joined recently from John Gifford as marketing director. However, any impact from his presence will take several months to emerge. In the meantime, the short-term prospects for the shares look far from appealing, even if the industry talk of manufacturers sharing the pain of Sainsbury's new year assault proves correct.

Capita

WINNING the contract to run the new written theory test for learner drivers has put Capita firmly in the driving seat. The management services group has its foot firmly on the accelerator — as long as it keeps winning new contracts.

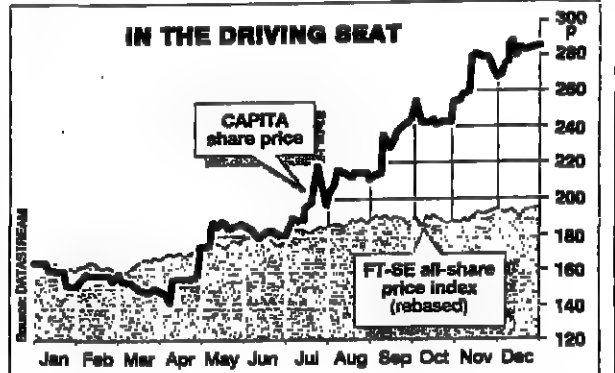
The driving test contract, won through its DriveSafe joint venture, is effectively worth £35 million to Capita over five years. With margins on Capita's outsourcing contracts running at about 9 per cent, the new contract should add the best part of £500,000 to annual profits.

A string of contract wins, many in the private sector, has seen already strong orders swell to an estimated £250 million. The client base is broadening, while the order book stretches out further. The core outsourcing

division provides nearly two thirds of group profits and the trading environment for outsourcing remains positive.

Merrill Lynch expects 1995 pre-tax profits to advance to £9.4 million, giving earnings of 11.6p. This puts the shares, which have had a good run, on an expensive multiple of about 25 times. However,

Capita has a strong position in a growing market and profit upgrades could follow the next results. The political downside should also be limited, with any future Labour Government likely to reconsider the compulsory element of compulsory competitive tendering, but widely expected to retain the competitive element.



British Telecom

ON his first day in the job, Sir Peter Bonfield, British Telecom's new chief executive, warned everyone not to expect miracles from him. He predicted a "roller-coaster ride" in 1996, meaning that the company will face as many defeats as victories.

Specifically, he was referring to BT's ability to retain its dominant position in an increasingly competitive market while Dom Cruickshank, the regulator, watches its every move. The regulator's heavy hand has taken its toll of BT's share price.

Sir Peter can try to get around the problem by building up the company's foreign — that is, unregulated — earnings. But the strategy is highly expensive and will take many years to achieve. BT, for better or worse, is a British operator and should take care of its home market first. That means making peace with Mr Cruickshank.

How Sir Peter does so is

open to question. A long lunch might be a good place to start, followed by a mutual commitment to try to avoid a full monopolies inquiry over anti-competitive behaviour. At best, an inquiry would create months of shareholder anxiety; at worst, it like the one on phone number portability, would go against the company. Mr Cruickshank is on a winning streak. BT's new chief executive would be foolish to hand the regulator another victory by showing no desire to compromise.

By test-time in London, the price of a barrel of Brent was below where it had started the New Year, down two cents on the day, at \$18.31. The milder turn in the European weather over the long New Year weekend had made the price of gas oil futures a little too. Gas oil for delivery during January was down \$3.75, to \$176 a tonne.

In spite of a rise in average Opec oil prices last year, from \$15.53 in 1994 to \$16.86, Saudi Arabia remains a victim. The Crown Prince will be expected to press ahead with spending cuts to balance the national budget.

American or Northern European winter would have sent oil prices through the roof. Yesterday, however, North Sea Brent oil managed a rise of just 20 to 25 cents a barrel on news that the running of Saudi Arabia had been handed over to Crown Prince Abdullah. King Fahd's half brother, pending the King's recovery from a stroke.

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COMMODITIES

LONDON COMMODITY EXCHANGE			
Commodity	Unit	Price	Change
Mar 96	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
May 96	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
Jul 96	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
Sep 96	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
Nov 96	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
Jan 97	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
Mar 97	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
May 97	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
Jul 97	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
Sep 97	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
Nov 97	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
Jan 98	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
Mar 98	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
May 98	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
Jul 98	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
Sep 98	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
Nov 98	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
Jan 99	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
Mar 99	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
May 99	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
Jul 99	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
Sep 99	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
Nov 99	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
Jan 00	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
Mar 00	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
May 00	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
Jul 00	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
Sep 00	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
Nov 00	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
Jan 01	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
Mar 01	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
May 01	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
Jul 01	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
Sep 01	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
Nov 01	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
Jan 02	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
Mar 02	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
May 02	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
Jul 02	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
Sep 02	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
Nov 02	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
Jan 03	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
Mar 03	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
May 03	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
Jul 03	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
Sep 03	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
Nov 03	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
Jan 04	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
Mar 04	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
May 04	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
Jul 04	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
Sep 04	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
Nov 04	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
Jan 05	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
Mar 05	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
May 05	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
Jul 05	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
Sep 05	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
Nov 05	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
Jan 06	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
Mar 06	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
May 06	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
Jul 06	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
Sep 06	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
Nov 06	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
Jan 07	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
Mar 07	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
May 07	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
Jul 07	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
Sep 07	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
Nov 07	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
Jan 08	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
Mar 08	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
May 08	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
Jul 08	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
Sep 08	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
Nov 08	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
Jan 09	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
Mar 09	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
May 09	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
Jul 09	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
Sep 09	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
Nov 09	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
Jan 10	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
Mar 10	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
May 10	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
Jul 10	1000/1000	1005/1000	0
Sep 10	1000/1000	1005/1000	0

THE
TIMES
CITY
DIARY

Brook bursts
the bubble

SOCIÉTÉ Générale Equities International's Christmas prize of a crate of champagne for correctly predicting the year-end level of France's CAC 40 index has been won by Claire Brook, of NPI.

She is responsible for the ethically faultless Global Care Unit Trust — a fund that is expressly prohibited from investing in companies engaged in the manufacture, supply and retailing of alcohol.

So what is Brook doing about the prize handed to her by SGEI's Roger Horne? Why, she's keeping it, though promises to dispense some of the booty among her colleagues.

About turn
IT MUST rank as one of the shortest retirements. Richard Payne, former chief executive of the £700 million Stroud & Swindon retired on December 31 after 28 years with the building society. Within 48 hours it was announced that he is to make a comeback as vice-chairman of the newly enlarged Stroud & Swindon after its formal takeover of the £100 million City & Metropolitan society. "I am only 53 so I look forward to being a young and active chairman all over again," says Payne.

Safe and sound
CAUTIOUS Hans Werdelin, chief executive of Sophus Berendsen, the little-known Danish group that owns 52 per cent of Rentokil, has answered a perennial question with a new year teaser. Yes, the Danes would happily consider cutting their stake and ceding control, but only if they could be guaranteed that Rentokil would maintain the 20 per cent a year profit growth it aims for. Humbler shareholders in ICI or British Gas would doubtless be delighted to give up their votes if boards would only give such guarantees. Even Rentokil is finding that life is getting harder.

Beam me up
A NEW YEAR. A new idea. And new frontiers. Barclays Stockbrokers is today launching a service whereby clients can be linked "live" to brokers in Glasgow with whom they are transacting business. The theme for the launch is based on characters from Star Trek... presumably so somebody can say when calling Glasgow, "beam me up, Scotty".

Missing agent
KNIGHT FRANK, the estate agent, is offering champagne to anybody who can help to solve its problem. After 100 years of using the three founders' names, the firm is dropping "Rutley". "We know William Rutley died aged 55 of a heart attack the day after a jewel sale in March, 1909, but that's about all. No known photograph of him exists, and we'd welcome any information," Bill Yates, a senior partner, says. The switchboards in 20 countries will doubtless welcome the change — especially in Singapore. There, the firm's full name was Knight Frank Cheong Hock Chye & Baillieu.

COLIN CAMPBELL

Could the Internet contain a message for Microsoft?

Richard Thomson asks if a computer empire can survive the accelerating pace of change

It began as a whisper among rival software makers to which few outside the computer industry paid much heed. But as the months have passed it has been discussed more openly, with more confidence and in areas such as Wall Street, where it is starting to matter. The question at issue is simple, but massive in its implications for the future of the computer industry: is Microsoft at last going soft?

It would have occurred to no one to ask this even 18 months ago. Microsoft's dominance of the software market is a central fact around which the personal computer industry organises itself. Its Windows operating programs are the basis for almost all programs and personal computer functions invented by innumerable smaller software companies around the globe. The reason is simple: about 90 per cent of the world's PCs run on Windows or MS-DOS, the original Microsoft software.

Microsoft's empire has lasted more than ten years — not long by most normal standards, but an aeon in the fast-moving computer world, where time often seems to be telescoped and spectacular innovations become old-hat within months. The problem for any computer company is not only to keep up with the breakneck pace of change, but also to try to predict and understand what is coming next so as to prepare for it.

This is what Bill Gates, the multi-billionaire chairman of Microsoft did so well at the beginning of the personal computer revolution. His big break was in getting IBM to adopt his software for its new personal computers in the early 1980s, when the market was first taking off. Once IBM machines became the industry standard, all the other hardware manufacturers needed Gates's program. Before long, he had overtaken IBM itself, the former computer colossus that had failed to anticipate the brave new world of PCs and paid the price by becoming just another hardware manufacturer.

IBM's sudden fall — it took only about three years — was a warning of how fast things change in the computer industry. If it could happen to IBM, say many observers, why not to Microsoft?

From having once been the enfant terrible of the industry, Microsoft is now the establishment. And from once being the quintessential computer geek, Mr Gates is soon to become a father — an event that has raised hope among his competitors that he may be losing interest in business in favour of normal family life.

As if to confirm his arrival as head of the computer establishment, Mr Gates has collected about him a think-tank of some of the biggest names in the industry, such as Butler Lampson, designer of the first personal computer, and C. Gordon Bell, who helped to develop the most successful minicomputer. Impressive as the list may seem, critics point out that these men did their seminal work in the 1970s and early 1980s. By the fast-moving standards of the computer industry, they look like dinosaurs who may have little to contribute to future developments. Wor-

ries about the company became more open with the publication of Gates's book *The Road Ahead*, a glowingly optimistic vision of the computerised future. To many who work in computers, it seemed a rather superficial hymn to the wonders of electronic toys.

And the key development is the Internet. This, in the long run, is likely to prove far more damaging to Microsoft than renewed government investigations into whether the company operates a software monopoly. New user-friendly software has made the net, the massive international computer network, more accessible to the public. This has opened up a new direction of development for the computer industry. It has also badly wrong-footed Microsoft.

For the past two years or so, Bill Gates has been steering his company's efforts towards CD-Rom technology.



Bill Gates has shown that Microsoft can still respond quickly when required

No one could blame him for that: most of the rest of the industry was doing the same. But the vision that had taken him into PC software in the early 1980s did not work for him this time. Neither he nor his high-powered think-tank saw the Internet development coming. With the growth of the net, CD-Rom is already looking primitive.

As a result, Microsoft has now lost the chance to create the kind of fundamental operating software for the Internet that it created for PCs. That has already been done by Sun Microsystems that created Java, a computer language already being adopted for Internet use by a significant slice of the industry, including IBM and Netscape, the leading provider of software for accessing the net's worldwide web.

It has already outstripped Microsoft's own software for the web. "Java is there to overthrow what we have

done," Mr Gates said recently, like a Roman emperor declaring war on the barbarians at his gate. At the same time, smaller and more nimble companies, such as Netscape, are running rings around it in writing the programs that help people to find their way around the web.

Even more disturbing for Microsoft are the predictions of many computer experts that the way the net is being organised will eventually make redundant the familiar PC operating programs, such as Windows. According to this view, most PCs will operate via the net, effortlessly interfacing with whatever programs are required. If this development ever comes about, Microsoft's core business would evaporate overnight.

Not surprisingly, the company's competitors are crowding. One observed that while, in evolutionary terms, Microsoft was still at the jellyfish stage, many Internet companies had already developed into vertebrates.

Nevertheless, jellyfish or not, Microsoft is still the most powerful force in the industry and one of the largest companies in the world. Bill Gates may look like a computer geek, but he is also a cunning and ruthless businessman who has the will, as well as billions of dollars in resources, to recover his position — which is what he is trying to do now.

The first step was a sweeping change of strategy last month when Microsoft abandoned its attempt to dominate the net by trying to tie access to it to its Windows 95 program. This was a staggering move that perhaps smacked slightly of panic, but it also showed that, in spite of its size, Microsoft can still be fast on its feet when necessary.

The coming year could deliver a nasty reminder. All forecasts agree that there will be a slowdown in these countries in 1996 — gentle in Asia, but sharp in Latin America. The smaller but also important economies of South Africa and Australia, which have problems of their own, can hardly resist this trend.

The OECD has therefore forecast a sharp slowdown in trade growth. What, then, lies behind its confident conclusion that there is "no chance" of an OECD recession? If recent growth, such as it was, has been exported, why not?

Conventional answer would be that there was no exported growth. If we look at the G5 countries, we can see that although exports have been much the fastest growing component of demand over the past five years, imports have grown still faster, so that "net exports" actually depressed demand. But this

is false reasoning, as Lombard Street Research argues in a fascinating analysis this month. It would be as logical to argue that a pay rise did not increase your income, because you raised your spending even faster. It was higher exports that stimulated incomes and spending; so if export growth now slows, one would expect lower income growth.

Can we expect some other stimulus to take its place? The popular candidate this year is the consumer. Seeing both unemployment and interest rates falling at the same time is a rare concurrence, and encouraged by the stock market boom, he will shake off his lethargy. The US consumer has proved it: consumer debt there has risen to new peaks. (Higher borrowing, be it noted, is the key: stock market wealth can support higher spending if it is used as collateral; but not if shareholders generally try to cash in.)

It is the same pattern likely here? The wage American is used to a high debt burden: most Europeans are debt-averse. He holds far more shares and has better job prospects (a good substitute for job security); and the value of his house is recovering, too. Not a European pattern, and, in any case, the latest surveys show US consumer confidence relapsing. A consumer-led recovery still looks possible, but it is hardly an odds-on bet.

The surviving monetarists shrug off such real-world doubts: world monetary growth is rising, and that means recovery. Well, perhaps; but why, and when? The main cause of monetary buoyancy at the moment is not buoyant borrowing, but huge Japanese official intervention in the currency markets. There is no precedent for distortion on this scale, and, therefore, no reliable basis for a forecast; and even if yen devaluation does act as a world stimulus (which does not sound all that likely), monetary growth affects the real economy only after a long and variable time lag.

Recent monetary growth cannot dependably affect the outlook for 1996. The risks in the consensus remain on the downside — unless we have again underestimated the dynamism of the part-forgotten third of the economic world we call the South.

Real growth begins at the Equator



Real growth begins at the Equator

The statement in this headline is a geographical travesty; but not really so far from the truth. In 1996, it is generally agreed, the G7 countries will see a slowdown from the 2.9 per cent real growth achieved in 1995 — hardly an impressive performance for what was billed as a recovery from three years in which growth averaged less than 1.3 per cent. Even the 2.4 per cent now expected would bring the five-year average up to a mere 1.8 per cent, the weakest "recovery" on record; and is due almost entirely to the buoyant spending expected from US consumers, and some real recovery at last in Japan. "Slow world growth" looks a fair summary of the Nineties so far.

But G7, or even the OECD is not "the world". The benighted countries known as "the South", previously regarded as client economies of the developed world, demonstrated real dynamic growth in the Nineties. The ten leading Asian economies achieved a four-year average of just over 5 per cent. Even the debt-laden Latin American group managed 3.5 per cent. Their growth generated a tremendous demand for imports, leading the largely unforecast recovery in world trade volumes, the main stimulant for what little growth the developed world enjoyed. Which is the client group now?

The coming year could deliver a nasty reminder. All forecasts agree that there will be a slowdown in these countries in 1996 — gentle in Asia, but sharp in Latin America. The smaller but also important economies of South Africa and Australia, which have problems of their own, can hardly resist this trend.

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Jon Ashworth on the retailing revolution that could kill off piped music

There's a new sound in store for shoppers

Deep in the heart of London's West End, a high-tech radio studio is in full swing. Lights flash and sound levels blip: "B — H — S — Ray — dec — yowwww. It's all happening at BHS."

In stores across Britain, shoppers pause in the aisles to listen. Wow, this is a professional radio service. The latest chart singles one moment, a live AA Roadwatch report the next — and all wrapped in with slick DJ'ing, bringing word of the latest special offers. Whatever happened to that dreary piped music?

Welcome to the world of Retail Broadcast Services (RBS), a fast-growing broadcast company that is turning the world of retail on its head. For the past year, shoppers in BHS stores have been treated to a tailor-made radio service, BHS Radio, which is beamed in by satellite from the London studios.

Long-suffering shelf-packers no longer have to listen to the same old songs repeating every two hours on continuous loop. Shoppers can enjoy music and DJ'ing tailored to the time of day — soft and soothing for the morning housewives, fast and snappier for the lunchtime trade. This is Capital Radio quality, with customised information thrown in.

And it's spreading. Virgin Megastore Radio, broadcast live from Tottenham Court Road, is beamed to Virgin outlets across the UK via the RBS studios. Texas, the DIY chain, rocks to the rhythm of Texas FM, which is conveyed to stores across the country via satellite dish, reaching an audience of one million listeners a week.

There is talk of adding motorway service stations to the list, enticing motorists with chat, music and the latest travel updates. Anyone with an Astra dish can tune to Texas FM, BHS Radio or Virgin Megastore Radio — and the stations are winning a loyal following. "We get letters from all over Europe," says Dean Miles, sales and marketing



Chris Parkinson, left, of Hammond Suddards, and Dean Miles, sales and marketing director for RBS, are in tune with shoppers

director for RBS. "We've even had one from the Ukraine."

Texas FM became an instant success when it was launched two years ago. "We do have the power to clear bins and sell-out T-shirts," says Miles. "Texas see it as a service to the customer: making the environment better, making the customer stay longer. It's also good for staff morale."

We might run an interview with the chairman, talking about the financial results, or feature staff competitions.

"The idea was, why not have their own customised radio station tailored to the times of day," says Chris Parkinson, who advises RBS as head of media finance at Hammond Suddards, the law firm. "First thing, it's: get the staff motivated, wake

them up. Then it's softer. Coming up to lunchtime, they'll switch to something more modern and boppy."

Miles says RBS is set to revolutionise retail trading. "It's never been done in this sort of format before. This is a radio station. It's all about trying to get new listeners. If customers stop coming in to the stores, we've got a problem." Relent-

less growth by RBS has inevitably angered the in-store music industry, which has enjoyed a monopoly on tape sales worth some £40 million a year. Stores are also locked in to long leases on sound equipment, making the total annual value of the market as much as £100 million. RBS has even received threatening phone calls and been harassed by competitors hoping to buy it out.

Enviably, RBS has sunk vast sums into its London studios without incurring an overdraft. Expansion has been financed step by step, purchasing CDs and equipment using sponsorship fees paid by the stores. Eager to step up the pace, RBS is sounding out brokers on the merits of a private placing or a move to the Alternative Investment Market (AIM).

Texas and BHS provide programmers with information on special offers. RBS installs the satellite dishes and sound systems and provides a tailor-made radio service. The signal is conveyed by digital line to the BT tower, which beams it into space via a satellite transmission station in Woolwich, south-east London. The signal is bounced back to waiting dishes in a footprint that reaches across Europe.

There is no telling where it could lead. RBS is about to be broadcast to university campuses, relaying tailor-made shows from a studio in Wakefield. There is talk of targeting hairdressing salons and shops — Hairdresser FM or DIY FM. Hospitals and Post Office counters may follow. RBS will act as the intermediary, relaying signals and providing shows if required.

Soon, shopping in Britain could be a highly pleasurable experience. Think about that the next time you're stuck in a six-strong queue with the tannoy blaring: "Mr Jones to checkout one."

من الفصل

INTERFACE

Peter James picks his way through the digital dirt track to unearth the treasures awaiting us in 1996

After a year of dead-ends, we're resurfacing the superhighway

Britain discovered the Internet in 1994 and the party started. In 1995 we woke up to the morning after — the greatest virtual hangover in history. The first half of the year kicked off with a bash the net, trash the net vengeance. The superhighway became the superhighway and hyperspace dissolved into hyperbole. The dream looked rocky. Only the techno-brigade was happy.

For too long their sacred territory had looked in danger of being hijacked from under their keyboards. The world was saying what they had known all along: the information superhighway was a myth. It was no more than a digital dirt track, the happy hunting ground of the geek, the soapbox of the

cybernerd, the jungle drums of the anarchic subculture, and the secret lair of the cognoscent of academe. Its treasures more cunningly concealed than a pharaoh's tomb. Then along came Bill Gates. Mr. Microsoft said the net was OK. So OK, in fact, that he wanted to own it, and if he couldn't own it then he would at least launch its biggest rival — and maybe gobble it up that way. Suddenly the net had the ultimate establishment endorsement and the gold rush was on again.

In 1994 there were 17 Internet providers in the UK. Now there are more than 100 and new players are entering the frame every week.

During 1996 we will see changes that will turn the net

from an elitist gizmo into the business tool no company can afford to ignore. It will become devastatingly efficient, awesomely powerful and by far the cheapest and most effective communications system in history.

Ease of use, reliability and speed will be the key developments in 1996. So far the trinity of hardware, software and net infrastructure has not been a happy one. In the early days the Internet backbone was solid but the hardware was flaky, and the software navigable only by Unix-literate rocket scientists. Two years ago there was a change. The

'Surfing the net on the software of today is rather like driving a Ferrari across a ploughed field'

hardware became brilliant but the software became flaky. People used to driving modern cars that never break down found themselves saddled with the software equivalent of a 1948 Ford Popular. Now both the software and the hardware are state-of-the-art but the net infrastructure has been left behind. Surfing the net right now on today's computers and software is like trying to drive a Ferrari across a ploughed field.

E-mail is fine, reliable and very fast, but the web is a banana republic. There is a world-wide drought of bandwidth. As far as the World Wide Web goes, the information superhighway is technology's equivalent of the M25 with ten times the traffic load

and no tarmac. We switch on our television sets and we don't expect *Panorama* or *Cracker* to take half an hour to download on to our screens: we expect instant access. The backbone providers are racing to be able to provide this access. And they will — it is starting to happen in the United States and it will happen in Britain before the end of this year.

But a lot more will happen here also this year, because the net is no longer the world's best-kept secret: it is about money; making money, spending money and saving money. E-mail is 20 times cheaper than sending a fax; by the end of 1996 all office managers will have put their companies online.

The Internet goes way beyond money, however. It may have embraced that one universal grail in its fibre-optic tentacles, but it has also encompassed the essence — if not yet the actual spirit — of human existence, in a handful of dust-free bytes on a floppy disk.

You can't yet be born on the net but you can order your coffin from the Carlos A Howard funeral home and you can have a virtual memorial forever in cyberspace. You can job-hunt, house-hunt, be diagnosed by your doctor, worship with the congregation in a church, find a spouse, buy groceries, a car and insurance, and read your virtual newspaper on a virtual beach on your virtual holiday.

What we will see coming in



during 1996 are major advances not just in user-friendly interfaces, but in techno-phobic-friendly interfaces, such as screens you instruct simply by touching or talking to them.

We will see major increases in bandwidth, making the downloading of web sites, records or movies very much faster, and we will see vast improvements in the mapping and navigating of the net: 1996 will be the year we will stop surfing the net on a battered board and start cruising in it style.

So far, with the exception of the odd gimmick, the net has been about words, images and more recently, sounds. Now it is about to get physical. Al-

ready a prototype glove exists enabling two people, anywhere in the world, to share physical sensations. Soon, while at work in your office, you will be able to cook the dinner at home, record a TV programme, let in the gasman and keep an eye on him on your screen, and even feed the cat.

If you think a verbal command might be too difficult to master, don't panic. Fujitsu in Japan has already devised the first cerebral one. All you have to do is think instructions to your computer.

This could be the final stage before our own brains become chip-activated: before we start to see friends wandering around at parties with little

tags clipped to their ears saying *intel inside!*

Then we will know we have achieved the ultimate interface and the roles will have been reversed. It will no longer be our machines that will be the true servants of the Cyberage, but ourselves. But that of course won't happen just yet. At least, not this year...

Peter James (scary@pavilion.co.uk) is an international best-selling author. His last techno-thriller, *Host*, was published both in print and by Penguin as the world's first electronic novel. His new novel, *Alchemist*, about genetic engineering, will be published by Victor Gollancz on January 18.

Keeping tabs on who wears designer labels

From beans to babies, everything is barcoded. Chris Ward reports

BARCODES were invented more than 100 years ago by an American cattle shipper who wanted to identify his rail wagons, and now grace everything from baked beans and babies to the Royal Navy's aircraft spare parts.

These Universal Product Codes, as they are more properly known, are allocated by the Universal Codes Council based in Dayton, Ohio. But you even obtain your own personal barcode on the Internet from <http://www.milk.com/barcode/>.

The problem with barcodes is that they need lasers and coherent light sources to read them fully. Even with today's technology, they can be rendered useless by something as simple as a coating of frost or dust on the reader's window.

As a result, the search has been continuing for a means of identifying objects which is as cheap as a barcode but impervious to harm. Now Id Systems Ltd of Knutsford, Cheshire, thinks it has found the answer with its FutureTag system.

The size and shape of a postage stamp, a FutureTag is a printed low-profile copper-plated antenna which can be scanned by a reader up to three metres away. The Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) tag is read using low-power radio waves working in the 125 kHz range which can pass through most substances except metal, allowing the FutureTag to be embedded inside objects.

"They are as cheap to produce as barcodes," says Deborah Latham, market development manager. "You'll even be able to put them on tins of beans, so a scanner could read an entire trolley-load of groceries in one go."

The advantage of FutureTags over barcodes, she says, is that information can also be given to them. "If you had, say, a container load of

car wings you could tell one it was to go to be painted green, another red and so on."

FutureTags can store up to 8k of information ranging from a simple number to complex routing information. And because, unlike barcodes, they don't need to be within sight of the reader they could be used to identify underground pipes or equipment in hazardous environments.

RFID technology is also behind a pet-tagging scheme backed by the RSPCA. Animals — including the royal corgis Oxo and Bisto — have an 11mm microchip injected into the loose skin on the back of their necks. The chip holds a 10-digit identification number which can be read by RFID scanners in hundreds of RSPCA and animal rescue centres. That information is stored in the PetLog national computer database, so the owner of any lost animal can be quickly traced.

About 200,000 dogs, several thousand cats and a few hundred horses currently have implanted chips, which cost £25. The RSPCA is pressing for the scheme to be made compulsory, as it is in France.

Similar technology is behind the Home Office Offender Tagging trials, whereby criminals are put under surveillance. If they stray more than a set distance from a RFID receiver a warning signal is sent to police. The technology is not perfect yet, though, and it is expected that the original six-month trial due to end next month will be extended.

RFID tags are also on trial in several maternity hospitals to avert the threat of newborn babies being stolen, and in retirement homes worried about residents straying. The complete system costs £10,000. "FutureTag will be available next year," says Latham. "We're thinking up new applications for it every day."

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Boat show is on the crest of a virtual wave

THE Internet will surface at the London International Boat Show which opens at Earls Court on Friday — and surprise visitors who thought the marine world had escaped technology.

"An 'Internet Deck' has been created with 24 Zenith computers which visitors will use to surf the net and yachting enthusiasts will be able to 'race' the computers on a specified course.

The 'cyberspace' is one of the biggest at a non-computer exhibition in Britain — far larger than those provided by the major political parties at their annual conferences last autumn — and results directly from BT's sponsorship of this year's round-the-world yacht race, the BT Global Challenge.

"We are sponsoring the race to increase the global awareness of the BT brand and also using it as a technology base to explain what we are doing with other products and services," says Kim Fitzsimmons, special events manager for the race.

Visitors to the net deck will be able to monitor a prototype of the new race-reporting system developed by BT.

"We have been co-sponsors of successive round-the-world races and each time we have developed the race-

trailing technology to make it more watchable," says Bob Semaine, BT's project director.

Visitors will also be able to join in regular links via the Internet and Inmarsat satellite with Sam Brewster, the yachtswoman currently sailing round the world.

"With the latest developments in satellite and online communications, the action and personalities involved in this year's race will be an integral part of this year's boat show," says Dendil Lee of the organisers, the British Marine Industries Federation.

TONY DAVE

Chris Partridge reports on a digital expedition to Antarctica

In a winter wonderland

SCHOOL children around the world have been on an expedition to Antarctica via the Internet.

The Terraquest expedition aboard the polar cruise vessel *Livonia* visited Graham Land, the peninsula that sticks up from Antarctica towards the tip of South America, just before Christmas. Aboard the ship was a battery of satellite communications equipment operating on the maritime Inmarsat system, which enabled expedition members to post bulletins and digitised pictures on the Terraquest.com site.

Some team members even conducted live sessions, answering questions on the ecology of the region.

The expedition was led by American adventure writer Richard Bangs, author of *Riding the Dragon's Back*, an award-winning chronicle of the first descents down the Yangtze, and polar explorer Jonathan Chester.

They built up quite an archive of material on the Antarctic and its ecology, much of which is now available on the web site. Several pages are devoted to the ecological balance of the region, revolving around a small shrimp-like creature called krill, the staple food for whales and other cetaceans and as a major engine of photosynthesis.

The strength of the site is

that the descriptions have a liveliness and immediacy that gives a real sense of place. Photographs and even short videos accompany the text.

Perhaps the most vivid description is written by Richard Bangs: "Landing at Bailey's Head on Deception Island was like storming Coney Island on a sizzling Sunday in August. There were countless penguins milling about, some resting, some bathing, some waddling up the sooty hill."

"Our first stop was at a black sand beach famous for the size of its penguin colony."

There just is no way to describe a landscape that features these numbers, and the eye plays tricks as it sweeps the horizon: in the middle distance what looks like an overcooked meatloaf generously sprinkled with salt and pepper is really

a lava shelf dotted with tens of thousands of penguins."

Future Terraquest trips include Virtual Galapagos in May, a trek to Everest Base Camp and a climb to the summit of Kilimanjaro, all of which will be covered on the web.

One member of the team, photographer and writer Victor Goodpasture, will probably not be there, however. He was so overwhelmed by the beauty of Antarctica that he set up camp and stayed on to do further research.

He's keeping in touch with

his family in San Francisco by e-mail via a satellite link. His last letter noted that it was a lonely experience "but I have several hundred thousand new friends to keep me company... already, some have popped their noses into my cabin to welcome me."

Those new friends won't be able to e-mail him back because they are penguins. But other would-be explorers can reach him at goodpasture@earthlink.net.



Penguins waddle across the expedition's net site

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DESIGN

Portsmouth and Gosport are planning the most spectacular piece of urban revival in Britain



THEATRE

In New York, RSC veteran and *Star Trek* hero Patrick Stewart wows his fans as Prospero in *The Tempest*

THE TIMES ARTS



VISUAL ART

In Berlin, German and Russian curators join forces for a major new exhibition



TOMORROW

Homicide cops Brad Pitt and Morgan Freeman on the path of a serial killer in *Seven*

The Navy and all its Pompey

Lottery-rich Portsmouth need not spend £500m on attracting more visitors, says Marcus Binney

In the great race to celebrate the millennium, two urban neighbours in the South have taken a spectacular lead. Portsmouth and Gosport are planning the most spectacular piece of urban revival in Britain, matching the rejuvenated American waterfronts of Boston and Baltimore.

There is even a £100 million plan put forward by Hampshire County Council to link Portsmouth and Gosport by a light railway under the harbour.

Gunwharf, next to the harbour railway station, is billed as a new home for the Royal Yacht Britannia, converted to a conference centre and moored alongside a San Francisco-style fisherman's wharf with shops, cafes, restaurants and a new waterside hotel.

But is too high a proportion of lottery funds being used to create new attractions when money should be invested in giving a secure future to the historic ships and more of the naval dockyard buildings?

Portsmouth's aim is to draw more people to the city. But where will they stay? According to Michelin, the hotel situation in Pompey is dire compared with that at other top resorts — unless you stay across the water at Fareham.

So where is the lottery money going? First, to creating five kilometres of waterfront promenades. It could be Portsmouth's answer to London's Embankment, com-

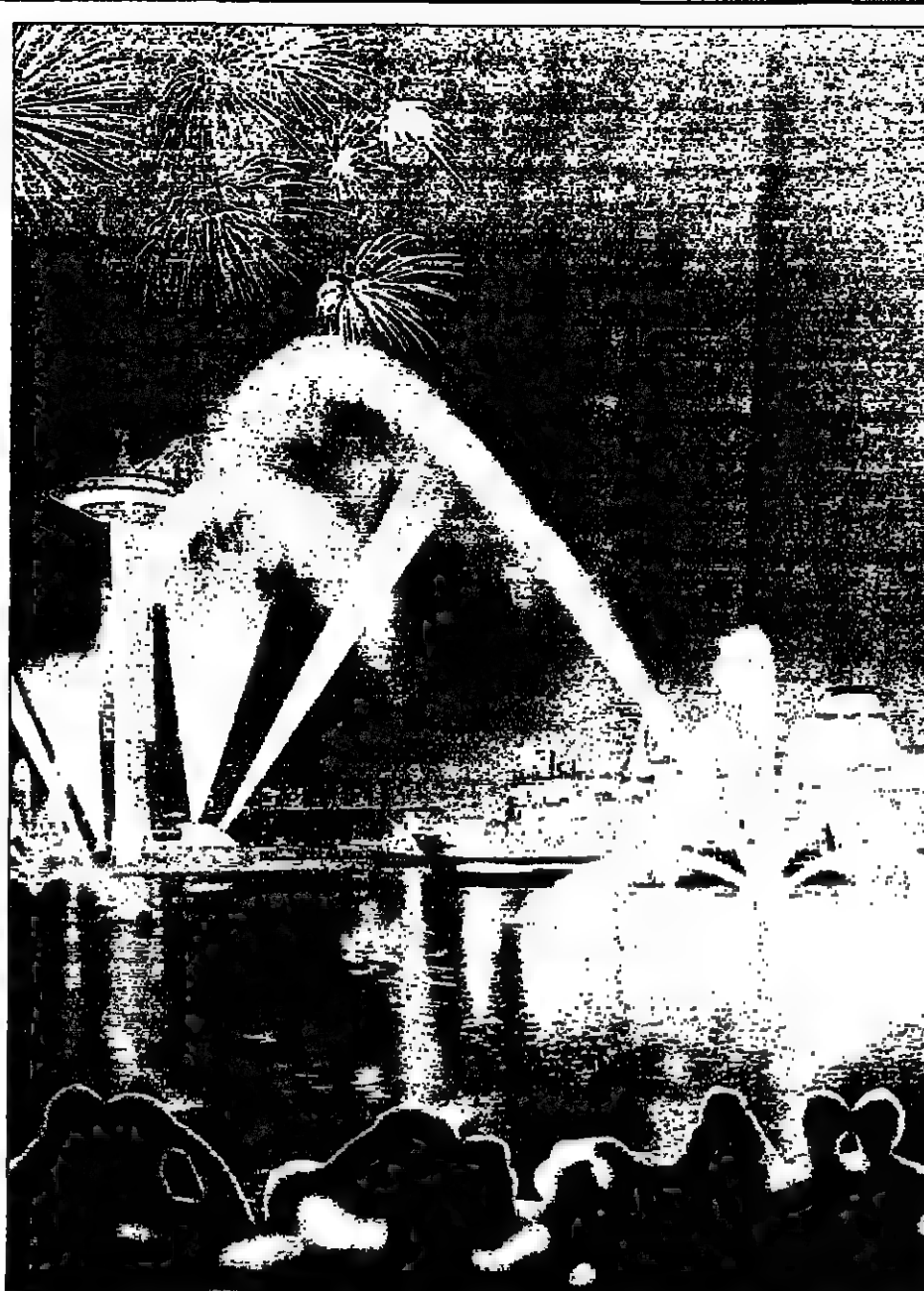
plete with resplendent sculptural lamp stands, granite walls and Yorkstone paving. But Celia Clarke, the chairman of the Portsmouth Society, claims that not enough trouble is being taken to ensure high-quality modern design.

With good reason, Virginia Bottomley, the Heritage Secretary, urged Portsmouth to hold an international design competition for the proposed 165m-high, £24 million harbour observation tower. Portsmouth should be looking for a modern-day Eiffel. Britain today bristles with inspired engineers who, perhaps using masts and rigging as a model, could design a world-famous landmark. But Portsmouth is dodging the issue. "We've had interest from Hong Kong and America," Spooner says. "We don't want to end up with a tower that no one wants to build."

So it will be a competition between developers.

Portsmouth seduced the millennium commissioners with an artist's impression showing a great water arch spanning the whole harbour. Things have since changed a bit. "It would," says one sceptic, "have required the largest marine pump ever built and would have sunk every ship that came into the harbour."

But the resourceful Spooner has gone to Geneva with his team to study the famous fountain on the lake. They are now planning two 150m Geneva-style vertical jets, which will tilt 45 degrees to meet and form a millennium "M", or a single 300m water arch. Lit by lasers, it will provide the world's first permanent night-time rainbow. Below water, fans will fire smaller plumes, like tugs



A computer's eye view of how Portsmouth Harbour may look on December 31, 1999

blasting their hoses to celebrate the arrival of a liner in port.

With advice from Speirs, the Edinburgh lighting consultancy, Portsmouth and Gosport are on course to providing a spectacular night-time water show in which new water-buses will play a key role. Taking their cue from the illuminations at the Seville Expo, the planners also envisage a pair of 8m-high water curtains serving as giant projection screens.

Portsmouth harbour is a big place and the lights will have to be bright and colourful to register. Here, current concerns about light pollution — preserving the darkness of the night-time sky — are having an effect. Jonathan Speirs explains: "All our lighting will be environmentally sensitive, aimed at features, rather than just beamed up into the sky."

The biggest new attraction will be a high-tech, Navy-in-

action centre, telling the story of the modern Navy through large-format film shows. The Navy's top brass is suddenly taking a keen interest as it realises the recruiting potential.

This touches the core of the issue. For a century after Trafalgar, the Royal Navy was not only master of the oceans but the world's best public relations outfit. Wherever a British ship came into port, whole towns went on fêve.

Today the real glory of Portsmouth — the working dockyard — goes virtually unseen. *Times* readers may lament the steady decline in the numbers of fighting ships, but on a pre-Christmas tour of the dockyard I saw an awesome series of destroyers, frigates, minesweepers down from Scotland, not to mention *The Invincible* and *Britannia*. The sight of many of these sleek and sinister fighting machines moored alongside

or being overhauled in deep dry docks is overwhelming. Of course the Navy can't have people wandering the working dockyard at will, but the public could be based around it. It could become one of the most popular features of a day in Portsmouth.

Every visitor to the Royal Dockyard is potentially a life-long friend of the Navy. The disappointment is that sailors are hardly in evidence in areas that the public visit. The Changing of the Guard is London's top tourist attraction. Portsmouth should offer the naval version, complete with Royal Marine bands. The Navy itself, more than any number of millennium towers, water arches and promenades, could put Portsmouth on a par with Oxford, Cambridge and Stratford. If Bottomley wants dividends, spectacular naval pageantry could be the best investment of all.

Eve takes the biggest bite of the Big Apple

THEATRE: Matt Wolf on the best — and worst — of the shows in a New York currently ruled by women

Step into a New York theatre this season, and one finds an array of divas whose like Manhattan has not seen in an age. Benedict Nightingale has already reported in these pages of the varying appeal of Zoe Caldwell (*Master Class*), Carol Burnett (*Moon Over Buffalo*) and Julie Andrews (*Victor/Victoria*). To them one could add Carol Channing in her umpteenth Broadway reprise as Dolly Levi, and Uta Hagen, who has made an off-Broadway smash out of *Mrs Klein*, by the National Theatre's literary adviser, Nicholas Wright.

Do men exist hardy enough to hold their own? Yes, in commercial terms anyway, if you're Patrick Stewart, the English classical actor-turned-*Star Trek* icon, who on Sunday finished a ten-week Broadway stint as Prospero in *The Tempest*. This production marked the commercial transfer of one first staged outdoors last summer in Central Park, where Trekkers and Bardophiles alike queued from 4am to snag the 1,800 free tickets on offer every evening.

What that same audience might think after spending \$60 on Broadway is anyone's guess, although at the matinee I attended no less an actor than Mandy Patinkin failed to return to his seat after the interval. While one admires director George C. Wolfe's desire to reinvigorate Shakespeare for American audiences, the result mangles the play's poetry and meaning.

This cheapening is embodied in the Miranda of Carrie Preston, who plays Prospero's daughter in a relentlessly cheeky sing-song that confuses youthful impetuosity with mental retardation. But Preston is not much worse than Mario Cantone's camp Stephano or Ross Lehman, late of London's *The Hot Mikado*, as his sidekick, Trinculo. Amid such players, Stewart emerges as the most sensibly spoken performer, but also oddly subdued, as if his thoughts were elsewhere — the Klingon empire, perhaps.

Wolfe is on happier ground on his home base, off Broadway's Joseph Papp Public Theatre, with *Bring In 'da Noise, Bring In 'da Funk*, an evening as embracing as *The Tempest* was dispiriting. The ambitious aim is to chart the development of black America through movement, or, as the show's subtitle puts it, to offer "a raptrap discourse on the staying power of the beat".

That the piece mostly meets its goal is a credit to the same savvy that Wolfe brought to Broadway's *Angels in America*, as well as a star, 22-year-old Savion Glover, whose feet glide effortlessly through the show's mix of history, sociology, and choreographic razzle-dazzle. One only wishes urban rap poet Reg E. Gaines possessed the language to match the evening's varied moods — and moves.

A senior artist, Athol Fugard, achieves a compar-

ability. Fugard may have written more complex and searing works about a political system now dismantled. But it seems unlikely he has ever spoken so personally, as London will discover when *Valley Song* transfers later this month to the Royal Court.

Back on Broadway, Sunday saw the final performance of the season's boldest experiment so far: the New York premiere of *Racing Demon*, with Richard Eyre directing David Hare's 1990 play about the Anglican Church. Why "bold"? In part because a New York public could be forgiven for going awry on National Theatre's imports to Lincoln Centre, since the same venue

produced both *Armadillo* and *Carousell*. In addition, the often grim lives of four South London clerics might not exactly excite those Manhattan theatregoers who tend to prefer the more elegant English environs of, say, *Vita and Virginia*.

As it happens, a special holiday matinee played host to a rap — if by no means full — house noticeably short on chatterers all too apparent these days in New York. And while the ensemble lacked the unique seamlessness of their London forebears, Hare's compassion rang out as it had for nearly five years at the National. The power of doubt, for the moment anyway, in Hare's blistering play had silenced a city otherwise given over to the diva.



Kathryn Meisle and Michael Cumpsty in David Hare's *Racing Demon*, the season's boldest experiment so far

ble richness with his new off-Broadway play, *Valley Song*, which represents this writer's best work since *The Road to Mecca* a decade ago. Doubling as his own director, South Africa's leading dramatist here plays two roles. The first is the Author, a bearded, sunken-cheeked man. Then, with little but a wool cap to signal the change of character, he is the illiterate mixed-race Oupa, a former corporal whose granddaughter Veronica (a radiant Lisa Gay Hamilton) is preparing to leave their village for the "romance" of big-city Johannesburg.

The play addresses issues of change and of maturity in a country poised between a hateful past it understands and a future at once forbiddingly unknowable and full of possi-

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VISUAL ART: How Berlin saw Moscow and vice versa

Best friends and deadly foes

Deep inside the Berlinische Galerie is a triptych of paintings that tells quite a tale. A portrait of Stalin is flanked on the left by a painting of the underground palaces of his Moscow Metro; and on the right — but at a much wider distance — by Sergei Lushchikhin's 1926 *The balloon has flown away*, two grey verticals of apartment blocks containing a central radiance of sky in which a tiny red balloon is disappearing.

This curiously asymmetrical hanging gives a due to the genesis of *Moscow-Berlin, Berlin-Moscow 1900/1950*, an exhibition which provides both an illuminating context

and stimulating supplement for the Hayward Gallery's *Art and Power*, jointly curated by Berlin and Moscow's Pushkin Gallery, the exhibition was conceived long before the Wall came down. Even as it was being mounted, Moscow insisted the paintings be hung in this way.

Where the Hayward exhibition focuses on the fate of individual artists between 1930 and 1945, that at the Berlinische Galerie is held together by the tensions between forces and ideologies.

Art and politics, blood and night, upheaval and catastrophe intrude into every viewpoint, just as they crashed their way into the 20th century.

As fine art, photography, architectural plans, theatre literature and music fight for space, order is imposed by chronology.

Long before his anguished days of rejection, of "degenerate" art and unpainted pictures, Emil Nolde looked East and painted his *Three Russians* in 1914. As August Macke's elegant Bonn women gazed into hatshop windows, so Natalia Goncharova, seduced by his vision, painted her *Moscow Street*, a milliner's mirror-image.

The exhibition is a cornucopia of German Expressionist art: Moscow, long deprived of a sight of the canvases, was greedy for as much Kirchner, Marc and Kandinsky as it could get its hands on.

After the October Revolution, Berlin was a centre of Russian immigration and a vibrant public platform for both proponents and opponents of the Revolution. Ivan Puni's *Synthetic Musician* of 1921, created in Berlin, became a symbol of the gallery itself.

But the Weimar Republic and the Moscow of the New Economic Policy were only temporary laboratories for Modernism. The exhibition shows the gradual erosion of liberties: the hardening of canvases into the fearful symmetries of Vladimir Vasilev's *The Commanding Family* (1938) and Adolf Wissel's *Kalenberg Peasant Family* (1939), or Gerassimov's *Stalin on the Kremlin Wall*.

HILARY FINCH

● Berlin-Moscow/Moscow-Berlin is at the Berlinische Galerie, Martin-Gropius-Bau, Berlin, (00 49 30 6169220) until Sun. It opens at the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow (00 70 95 2033809) on Mar 1

Spend the weekend in wonderful Copenhagen

One of the most popular events the Theatre Club has organised has been the weekend break, where members get away from it all, see the country and get some of the best seats for the best shows in Britain. Now you can get away, as we launch a year-long programme of visits to some of the most exciting cities in Europe.

Working in association with Art Cities in Europe, an initiative of the Federation of European Cities Tourist Offices, we will be offering trips to a different city or region every month. Planned destinations include Barcelona, Berlin, St. Petersburg, Prague, Vienna, Lisbon, Lyons and Malta. The cost of all the trips will include flights, accommodation, a cultural programme — and plenty of free time for you to spend exploring the cities on your own.

COPENHAGEN WEEKEND

March 7-10 WHAT better place to start the year of living continentally than Copenhagen, Cultural Capital of Europe for 1996? The weekend begins with a sightseeing tour and a visit to a rehearsal by one of the many performing companies in the city. In the evening there is a visit to a musical about Denmark's best-loved writer, Hans Christian Andersen.

Saturday is free, giving members a chance to use their Copenhagen Card, which will give them free entrance to more than 60 museums and tourist ven-



ues, as well as unlimited free travel on buses and trains. In the evening there is a visit to a production by Remote Control, the magnificent company led by Michel Laub, whose recent work has been acclaimed at major festivals.

On Sunday we have arranged a tour of the exhibition *Design and Identity* at the Louisiana Museum, one of world's finest repositories of modern art, which will also be housing an exhibition of works by Picasso. The package costs £500 per person and includes return flights, three nights in a four-star centrally located hotel, three dinners and two lunches, theatre tickets, a welcoming cocktail and the services of a local guide. For further details, call the Theatre Club office on 0171-387 9673 and we will send you an itinerary. Individual events may change for organisational reasons.

WIN A FREE TICKET

● TO celebrate the launch of our European programme we are offering free places on the Copenhagen trip to a lucky member and their partner. Send your answers to the questions below to the Theatre Club, Euston House, 81-103 Euston Street, London, NW1 2ET, to reach us by January 10.

1 Which British city was Cultural Capital of Europe in 1990?
2 What is the name of the famous amusement park in the centre of Copenhagen?
● ALL our travel packages are being organised through Arts Cities in Europe GmbH. For further details and a booking form telephone 0049 7531 90730, or write to Art Cities in Europe GmbH, Raitenaustrasse 5, D-78464 Konstanz, Germany (fax 0049 7531 90735).

HOW TO BOOK — AND JOIN

TO BOOK for any or all of this week's special offers, please phone the listed number during normal office hours. The price printed on the ticket you receive will be the special price negotiated by the Theatre Club. In some cases there may be a transaction charge in cover postage.

TO JOIN the Theatre Club either send a cheque for £12.50, made payable to The Theatre Club, together with your name, address and telephone number to The Theatre Club, P.O. Box 2164, Colchester CO2 8UL, or telephone 01206 741737 using your credit card. Please allow 28 days for delivery of your membership pack. For general inquiries call 0171-387 9673

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Costs order inappropriate

Fitzgerald and Others v Williams and Others
O'Regan and Others v Same

Before Sir Thomas Bingham, Master of the Rolls, Lord Justice Waite and Lord Justice Otton
[Judgment December 20]
Having regard to articles 6 and 220 of the EC Treaty, the English court should not, in the exercise of its discretion, order security for costs under Order 23, rule 1(1)(a) of the Rules of the Supreme Court to be given by an individual plaintiff who was a national of and resident in another member state party to the Brussels Convention on Jurisdiction and the Enforcement of Judgments in Civil and Commercial Matters (OJ 1972 L260/32).

The Court of Appeal so held, allowing an appeal by the plaintiffs, 18 of whom were Irish citizens resident in the Republic of Ireland, from Sir John Wood, sitting as a deputy judge of the Queen's Bench Division, who had ordered them to give security for the costs of the first defendant, Bryn Lloyd Williams, in the sum of £100,000 within 14 days in respect of the action they had brought against him and other defendants claiming damages for fraudulent misrepresentation and the recovery of sums allegedly belonging to them.

The court also allowed the plaintiffs' appeal against further orders of Sir John Wood (i) discharging a Mareva injunction on the ground of non-disclosure, (ii) granting the first defendant leave to draw on funds to which the plaintiffs made a proprietary claim, (iii) refusing to secure funds held by the sixth defendant for the fourth defendant, and (iv) as to mode of trial.

Mr Peter Harvey and Mr A. Fraser-Urquhart for the plaintiffs; Mr Andrew Macnab as amicus curiae: the first defendant in person.

THE MASTER OF THE ROLLS, referring to the issue of security for costs, said that the question was whether the plaintiffs who were resident in Ireland had Community law rights which the court had to respect by holding

that it had no jurisdiction to make an order for security against them, or, if it continued to have jurisdiction, by refraining from the exercise of its discretion to make an order.

His Lordship referred to *Porzelack KG v Porzelack Ltd* (1987) 1 WLR 430, *De Bry v Fitzgerald* (1994) 1 WLR 332 and *Berkley Administration Inc v McClelland* (1990) 2 QB 407.

In that last case Lord Justice Parker and Lord Justice Russell, reversing the judge's decision and ordering security against plaintiff companies ordinarily resident in other Brussels Convention EC member states, had rested their judgments on the conclusion that Order 23, rule 1(1)(a) related to residence, not nationality, and thus did not discriminate, even covertly on the ground of nationality so as to impugn article 7 of the EC Treaty.

Lord Justice Staughton had reached the same destination but by a different route, holding that a provision, such as that rule, directed at those not ordinarily resident in the UK was tantamount in its practical effect to a provision directed at nationals of other countries or principally affected such nationals.

He had then considered whether such different treatment was objectively justifiable and concluded that the conferment of a discretion was objectively justifiable. His preferred conclusion was that there was no discrimination under the rule since there was no different treatment which was not objectively justified.

The court was now asked to reconsider that line of authority in the light of Case C-398/92 *Mund and Fester v Hatzes International Transport* (1994) ECR I-409. There the question was whether paragraph 91(2) of the German Code of Civil Procedure, in authorising seizure of assets where judgment was to be enforced abroad, even in a country which was party to the Brussels Convention, was contrary to the prohibition of discrimination in article 7, now article 6 of the EC Treaty.

The European Court of Justice had concluded that paragraph 91(2) fell within the ambit of the Treaty and that it entailed a covert form of discrimination, because while a judgment to be enforced abroad might be against a German national, the great majority of enforcements would be against persons who were not of German nationality or legal persons established in Germany.

The European Court had accepted that a presumption of difficulty in enforcing a judgment in a non-member country was legitimate, but held that such a presumption was not justified where enforcement was to take place in a member state party to the Convention. The court concluded that the provision was not justified by objective circumstances.

In the light of that decision his Lordship considered:

1 Did the rule fall within the scope of the Treaty provisions?
The answer was in the affirmative. The fiscal distinction between the present rule and the German provision could not be held to support a difference of principle between them and the same legal rule governed both.

2 Did articles 6 and 220 of the EC Treaty confer rights directly enforceable in members states following legislative implementation of the Convention?
Again the answer was affirmative. The *Mund* decision clearly proceeded on that basis.

3 Was the rule discriminatory?
The rule plainly empowered the court to make orders against plaintiffs ordinarily resident out of the jurisdiction which it could not make against plaintiffs ordinarily resident within it. Therefore, it involved discrimination in the sense used by the court in *Mund*, in that different plaintiffs were treated differently.

4 Was that discrimination based on nationality?
On its face the discrimination for which the rule provided was based on ordinary residence in article 7, now article 6 of the EC Treaty.

5 Was the evidence not that enforcement in Ireland was difficult, but rather that it presented no difficulty, it followed that no order for security should have been made against the Irish plaintiffs.

Nothing in his Lordship's judgment bore on the case in which security was sought against a foreign insolvent company whether resident in a member state or not.

Nor was it suggested that the traditional practice of the English court required any modification where the plaintiff was ordinarily resident in a country which was not a member of the Community.

Lord Justice Waite agreed and Lord Justice Otton delivered a concurring judgment.

Solicitors: Marrache & Co Treasury Solicitor.

In re M (a Minor) (Habitual residence)
Before Lord Justice Millett and Lord Justice Balcombe
[Judgment December 20]

A dispute over a child's habitual residence under the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction (Schedule 1 of the Child Abduction and Custody Act 1985) was a dispute about the child's future, not a dispute between the parents. It was to be determined as a matter of fact.

Habitual residence could not be acquired by a child who was not physically resident in the country concerned. The mere act of taking the child to a particular country might not be enough to confer habitual residence.

Where both parents had parental responsibility and had agreed where the child should live, one parent could not by a unilateral decision alter the child's habitual residence.

The Court of Appeal so held allowing an appeal by the father against a decision of Mrs Justice Brice made on the mother's application in *Leads* on November 30, 1995 that she had jurisdiction in wardship over K, a boy aged three, and ordering that he be returned from India before January 25, 1996.

Mr Allan Levy, QC and Mr Roger Bickelike for the father; Miss Pamela Scriven, QC and Mr

Alasdair Wilson for the mother; Miss Judith Hughes, QC and Mr Robert Cole for the Official Solicitor as guardian ad litem.

LORD JUSTICE BALCOMBE said the mother had been born and raised in India. They had married by arrangement in India in April 1990. Their habitual residence at all material times had been in England and Wales. Both parents had parental responsibility. They had separated at the end of January 1994.

The parents had agreed that K should live with his paternal grandparents in India. In February 1994 K had gone to India. He had remained there since, and so had spent almost half his life there.

In July 1995 the mother had withdrawn her consent and by an originating summons had initiated wardship proceedings, seeking to invoke the jurisdiction of the English courts.

The judge had decided that K was habitually resident in England and Wales in July 1995. She had followed *In re J (a Minor) (Abduction: Custody rights)* (1990) 2 AC 562 had said it was a question of fact.

Someone must be resident to acquire habitual residence. The child's residence in India could not become a residence in England and Wales without his ever having left the country. To hold otherwise would be to abandon the factual basis and the definition of habitual residence in metaphysical legal concepts.

LORD JUSTICE MILLETT said habitual residence was a question of fact, not an artificial legal construction. It was not possible for a person to acquire residence in a country while remaining throughout in another country. Neither parent could change the child's habitual residence unilaterally.

Having joint responsibility, the parents had decided K should be

continue. Despite the normal principle that each parent can act unilaterally it must be possible for either parent in that position, and in the absence of a court order, to revoke their agreement to their child being habitually resident abroad, so as to have the dispute between them resolved in their own home country where they both are.

His Lordship had difficulty in following that particular piece of argument. It treated habitual residence as a legal concept whereas the House of Lords in *In re J (a Minor) (Abduction: Custody rights)* (1990) 2 AC 562 had said it was a question of fact.

Someone must be resident to acquire habitual residence. The child's residence in India could not become a residence in England and Wales without his ever having left the country. To hold otherwise would be to abandon the factual basis and the definition of habitual residence in metaphysical legal concepts.

LORD JUSTICE MILLETT said habitual residence was a question of fact, not an artificial legal construction. It was not possible for a person to acquire residence in a country while remaining throughout in another country. Neither parent could change the child's habitual residence unilaterally.

Having joint responsibility, the parents had decided K should be

resident in India. He was still physically present and resident there.

Since she did not have sole parental responsibility even had the mother removed K without his father's consent it could not have changed his habitual residence. A fortiori a mere decision on her part could not change his habitual residence.

Even if the mother had had sole responsibility the child would not be resident in England and Wales while he remained in India.

The dicta of Mrs Justice Hale appeared to be obiter but his Lordship could not accept them as a correct statement of the law since it turned habitual residence into an artificial legal concept contrary to the decision in *In re J*.

If a single parent sent a child to Australia, and after years had passed decided the child should return, the only place for the dispute to be tried would be Australia.

Here the parties brought physical care of the child had the support of one of the parents. The judge had assumed that it was a dispute between the parents. In fact it was a dispute about the future of the child. Parliament had decided the dispute should be determined in the country where the child was habitually resident.

Solicitors: Walker Morris, Leeds; Castle Sanders, Leeds; Official Solicitor.



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Company 'in person' cannot recover costs

Jonathan Alexander Ltd v Proctor
Before Lord Justice Hirst, Lord Justice Peter Gibson and Mr Justice Burton
[Judgment December 21]

A company which instead of employing a solicitor authorised a director to act and appear for it in court proceedings was not entitled to recover costs. Nor was it a litigant in person within the meaning of the Litigants in Person (Costs and Expenses) Act 1975.

The Court of Appeal so held dismissing an appeal by Jonathan Alexander Ltd from an order of Deputy Judge Hunter made on June 3, 1994 that the appeal of the defendant, Amanda Proctor, against the order for costs made by District Judge Trest on April 1, 1994 following the trial of its action for the unpaid balance of money due under a building contract be granted and declaring that the company having appeared at the trial by a director was not entitled to costs as a litigant in person.

Mr Allen Dyer for the company; Mr David Lord for the plaintiff.

LORD JUSTICE HIRST said at the trial before Judge Medawar

the company had been represented by one of its directors.

The issue was whether it was in principle entitled to recover its costs of some £25,000, mainly an hourly rate for the director's time, but including £7,500 for fees of expert witnesses.

Mr Dyer had submitted that the correct starting point was section 51 of the Supreme Court Act 1981, which he submitted gave the court the widest possible discretion in the award of costs. As a second line of argument he had submitted that the company was a litigant in person within the scope of the 1975 Act.

Mr Lord submitted that crucial issue was the meaning of "costs". Apart from exceptions relating to small claims and arbitration proceedings, it was a restricted, first, to charges and disbursements incurred by solicitors and, second, since 1975, to sums in respect of any work done, and any expenses and losses incurred by litigants in person.

In his Lordship's judgment it was important to note that the general discretion conferred on the court by section 51 of the 1981 Act was subject to the provisions of "this or any other enactment and to rules of court".

Only to the extent that such enactments and rules made provision in relation to costs to be paid to a company representative could such a person fall within the scope of section 51. No such provisions appeared in the rules so section 51 did not avail Mr Dyer, who could only succeed if he could bring his case within the 1975 Act.

There was nothing in that Act to enlarge the ordinary meaning of "litigant in person". His Lordship would dismiss the appeal, although with great regret since it revealed a serious lacuna in the law and resulted in considerable injustice to the company.

A simple amendment to the rules could bring company directors within the scope of "other representatives" under section 51(2).

LORD JUSTICE PETER GIBSON said a company was a persona ficta. It was a consequence of the artificial nature of a company as a legal person that it inevitably acted by it and decisions for it had to be taken by natural persons: the law of agency was at the root of company law.

The acts of the authorised agent, acting within the scope of his authority, were under ordinary

principles the acts of the company. When a company authorised a director to act and appear for it in court proceedings and the court allowed the director to act and appear, the company acted and appeared by the director. The company was the litigant.

The crucial question was whether it could be said of the company so acting and appearing that it was a litigant in person for the purposes of the 1975 Act. In his Lordship's judgment it was not.

A litigant in person in ordinary parlance was a party to litigation who represented himself, appearing in person himself. If someone other than himself represented him, then, notwithstanding that the other person was his agent, that party was not a litigant in person.

It had been repeatedly and authoritatively stated that a company could not appear in person and against that background it was highly improbable that Parliament intended the term "litigant in person" to apply to a company represented by a director.

Mr Justice Burton delivered a judgment concurring in part.

Solicitors: Goodman Derrick; Payton Hicks Beach.

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"It's a super job," says Meg Cowap, who lives near Sleaford and has worked for 20 years as a secretary on farms around Lincolnshire. To gain experience after getting a City & Guilds qualification, she started working two mornings a week through an agency, then built up her own client list, largely through recommendations ("farmers never respond to ads," she says). Now she works full-time. With 15 regulars whom she

Sally Watts finds a growing demand for computer skills in the countryside

visits weekly or monthly, plus some occasional, she has almost more work than she can handle.

Her fax, mobile phone, word processor, copier and computer are Mrs Cowap's tools. The computer has an agricultural accounts package, enabling her to offer a "computer bureau" service.

As well as building up their own technology, farm secretaries must keep up to date with all the latest rules and regulations, since farmers themselves are often too busy. For example, Mrs Cowap has just attended a seminar on the EU's common agricultural policy.

The amount of work involved at each farm depends on the complexity of the business. A large arable farm may offer only modest work, while a mixed intensive one will probably need more help because it must keep records of animal pedigree, movement and breeding. Other farms may have diversified into, for example, stabling and livery, or golf courses (especially in the Home Counties), soft fruit or

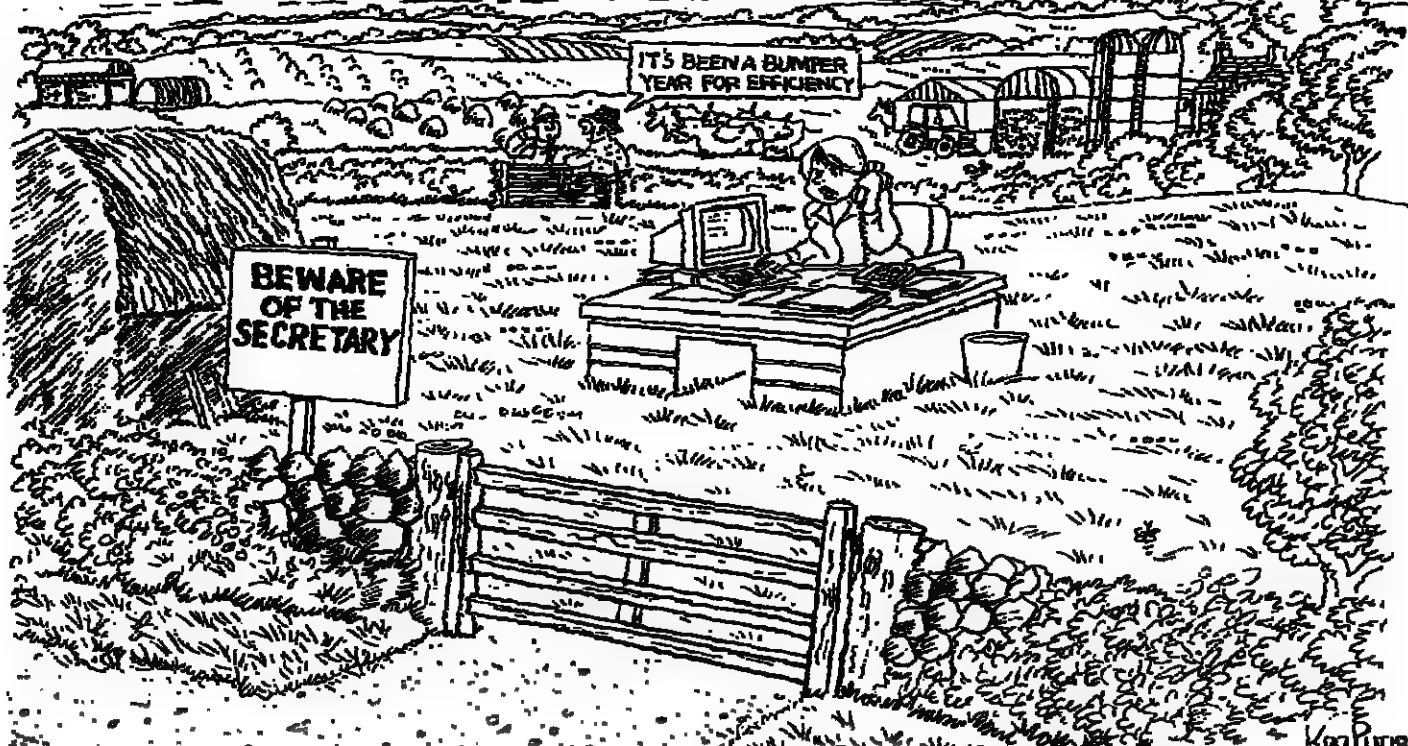
tourism. All these will involve more work, including correspondence, and such farms often need a full-time live-in secretary — a useful first job for a youngster, perhaps.

An office secretary with good general skills could adapt well after taking a farm accountancy course, says Mrs Cowap. But it can be an isolated life. "You may not see the farmer at all," she says, "and his wife is increasingly out at work. The secretary may have to let herself into an office which has not been touched since her last visit."

Sally Wood, who set up as a farm secretary as a teenager, has never found the work isolating, though. She comes from a farming background and took an agricultural course after secretarial college, gaining a national diploma in business and finance. Then came nine months working for an accountant before she set up as a farm secretary in Leicestershire and, like Meg Cowap, gained clients through word-of-mouth recommendations.

"Once you have one or two, you are on your way," she says. In her first year she acquired a computer with agricultural programmes, and she also uses a word processor.

Now 25, Sally is beginning again in business. She married a farmer, moved to Cheshire and is developing a new territory in Derby-



shire, where the farms are smaller. So far she has two clients. To get better-known she has sent leaflets to local farmers and will follow up with visits, meanwhile she returns to Leicestershire twice a week.

She sees the need for farm secretaries increasing with the workload. Some farmers, she says, still keep their records in a cardboard box part of the secretary's

role is to put them on computer. "More and more work is coming from the Ministry and we handle it," she adds. "There is a national shortage of farm secretaries, yet it is a very good life and you can work however many hours you like."

Just as the office secretary is often called an administrator, so farm secretaries may be known as farm administrators, according to Tim

Cartwright, a computer bureau manager on the farm consultancy side of a Grantham land agency. "Farm secretary work is a good career because farming is so diverse," he says.

Farm secretaries have their own professional body, the Institute of Agricultural Secretaries and Administrators, which has 800 members, most of whom are self-

employed. Mrs Cowap edits its quarterly journal, and monthly bulletins give information on such matters as new wage levels and set-aside deadlines.

"To survive, farms must be efficient," says Mrs Cowap. "Increasingly they need administrative skills and someone who understands EC regulations. So there is room for more of us."

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CITROËN

Formation of new Formula One team drives Britain's former world champion to most difficult test

Stewart's return sets up challenge to old order



Oliver Holt reveals why the man who steered clear of risk decided to form his own team

The motor show hardly ever stops in Detroit, but tomorrow the high rollers are coming to Monrovia. From his home on the shores of Lake Geneva to this frozen city on the shores of Lake Erie, Jackie Stewart, the most successful Formula One racing driver Britain has had, is arriving to launch a new assault on the upper echelons of the sport.

Since he won the last of his three drivers' world championships in 1973, Stewart has remained aloof from grand prix racing, pouring himself into other interests. Fraternising with royalty and running a highly successful shooting school. Amid the legion of tales of sportsmen who cannot cope with their removal from the limelight at the end of their careers, he seemed a glorious exception.

He came to occasional races, of course, largely to commemorate, and he was chairman of Paul Stewart Racing, a team latterly run by his son, Paul, which was one of the most successful in the junior formulas. It was obvious, though, that his life had moved on and the huge bursts of adrenalin were coming from elsewhere. Yet now, the man who won 27 grands prix in 99 starts, is back.

His involvement and his continuing influence within the sport makes this an effort that could change the face of grand prix racing, every bit as significant as Benetton's entry into the sport in the 1980s. Stewart Grand Prix represents a new challenge to the old order from one of its own. The big four of Williams, Benetton, Ferrari and McLaren, may soon become the big five.

"This is probably the biggest challenge of my life," Stewart said yesterday. "Paul and I talked for a long time about

whether we wanted to go into Formula One, but now we have taken the plunge. But the story of my life has been to remove the unnecessary hazards of a calculated risk-taker. That is why I am here to talk about this today, because I removed most of the hazards that could be removed when I was a driver.

"It is one thing being Jackie Stewart, the racing driver," he said, "and quite another to be Jackie Stewart, team owner. If I had tried to start my own team too early, it might have been a very expensive mistake. We will not go into Formula One in a half-hearted manner."

He has not returned in supplication, admitting that he can stay away no more, far from it. He is back because at last the time is right. Stewart is a calculating man, a man who built his racing life around avoiding risks, and the pieces are beginning to fall into place.

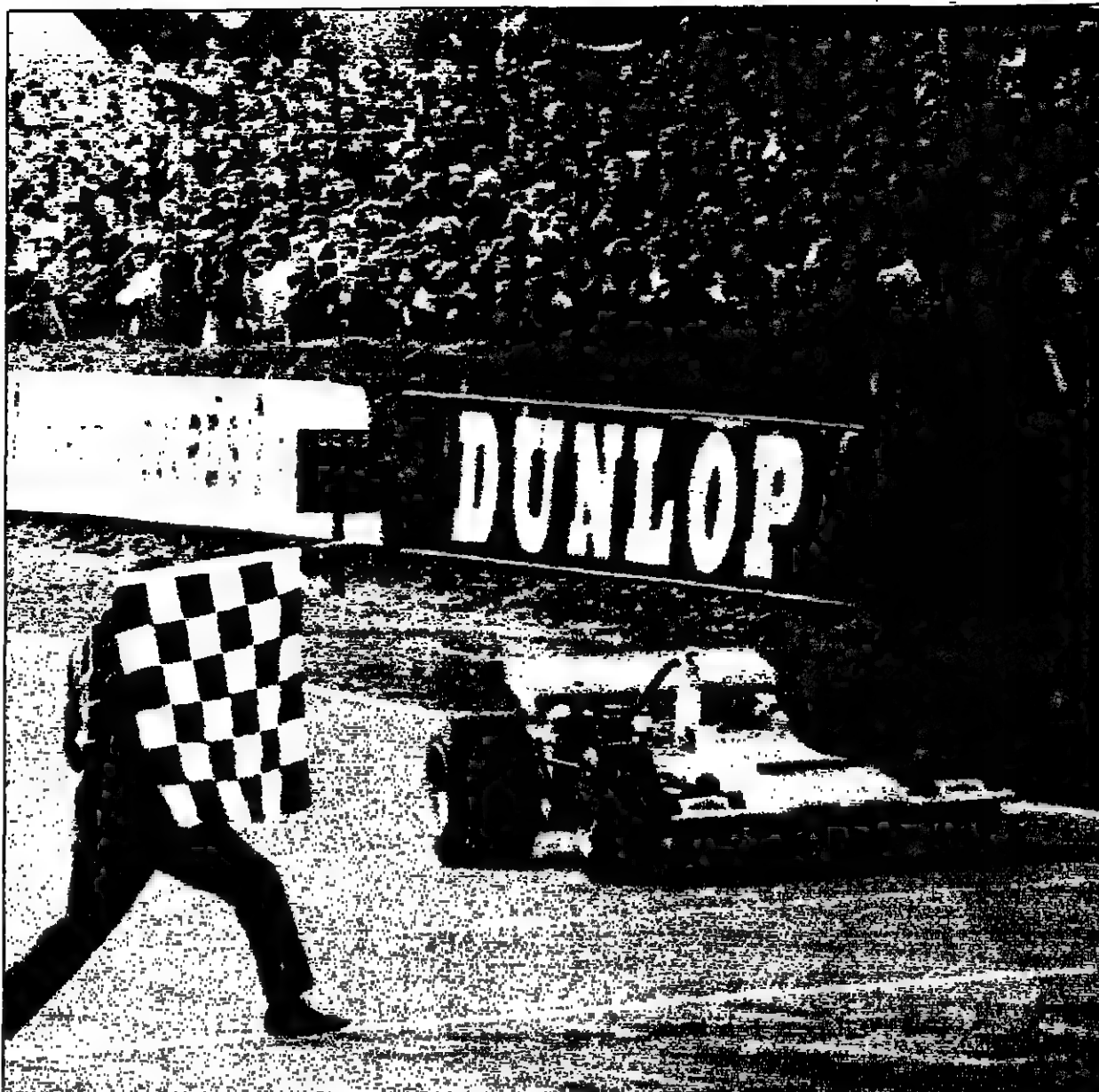
'He could change the whole face of grand prix racing'

Stewart Grand Prix, with him as chairman and Paul, who recently retired from an undistinguished racing career, as managing director, will burst on to the Formula One scene at the beginning of 1997, with an exclusive supply of the top-rank Ford engines.

No drivers have been mentioned yet, but Stewart has strong links with men like David Coulthard and Gil de Ferran, the IndyCar rookie of the year.

This will not be an effort like that produced by Pacific or Simtek, recent Formula One new boys who found they could not stand the heat. Stewart is building on strong foundations and is banking on heavy financial backing to allow him to challenge for the world championship within five years.

The key to his return was



Stewart raises his hand in salute as the chequered flag comes down to signal another victory, a scene followed inevitably by the presentation of the winner's garland, right

the involvement of Ford, who powered each of his world championship wins with Tyrrell — in 1969, 1971 and 1973 — and with whom he has maintained a professional relationship ever since.

The agreement will also mark Ford's return to big-time after their travails with McLaren and Benetton, with whom they nevertheless won the world championship, and their recent drift into the backwaters

of the sport with the Swiss team, Sauber.

"The involvement of Ford has been immensely important," Stewart said yesterday, before he left for the company's world headquarters in Dearborn, Michigan, where the official announcement of his involvement will be made tomorrow. "For them to make the decision to choose us is an enormous privilege."

Stewart's career began at a

time when racing was considered a pure sporting activity. No advertising was allowed on cars and he was competing with the icons of the British racing establishment, men such as Graham Hill and Jim Clark. A little like Alain Prost, he quickly gained a reputation for brilliant percentage driving, eschewing the spectacular for steady, attritional performances.

He was instrumental in changing the attitude of the racing fraternity towards circuit medical standards in particular and retired one race short of his hundredth grand prix when he refused to take part in the last race of the 1973 season as a mark of respect for his team-mate, Francois Cevert, who had been killed during practice for the race, the United States Grand Prix.

He is confident, though, that he can bridge the gap in racing

generations. Stewart Grand Prix will build their own cars at the existing site of Paul Stewart Racing — who ran Formula 3000 drivers such as Coulthard and Dario Franchitti — in Milton Keynes before they move to a new factory at a greenfield site nearby in 1998. The 50 staff they employ now will eventually expand to more than 150.

"Within the first five years, I would like to win a grand prix and be serious contenders for the world championship," Stewart said, "but you have to remember it took Frank Williams ten years."

Stewart, who will attend all the grands prix and scale down his involvement in other projects to concentrate on Formula One, is planning to finance his operation hand-somely with a network of long-term sponsors, which could create a financial windfall.



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South African cricket welcomes the Cape Coloured it once spurned

D'Oliveira remains on England's side

Simon Wilde meets
a cricketer whose
life is inextricably
linked with images
of a nation's history

Another day in South Africa, another peace made with the past. Basil D'Oliveira, whose life is inextricably linked with one of the darkest periods in his country's history, yesterday paid his first visit in 38 years to Newlands Cricket Ground, an arena which, in more civilised times, he would probably have regularly graced.

D'Oliveira was born only a few miles from the ground, at Bo-Kaap, in the shadow of Table Mountain, and played for St Augustine's, a local club, but his career — he was a talented all-rounder — was frustrated by apartheid. His club was forced to relocate under the infamous Group Areas Act and he had to emigrate to England to find fulfilment.

The United Cricket Board of South Africa (UCBSA), which is sensitive to these things, did not let yesterday's occasion go unmarked. D'Oliveira was the guest of honour at a lunch on the ground at which were present prominent figures from the South African government and, seemingly, most of the administrators of English cricket. Raymond Illingworth sat down to lunch in incongruous fashion, reflector sunglasses perched stubbornly upon his head. D'Oliveira was seated between Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Ali Bacher, the managing director of the UCBSA.

Also invited were several leading activists for multi-racial sport in the "old" South Africa, such as Sam Ramsamy, but there was nobody, apparently, representing the late John Vorster, the Prime Minister whose intransigent response to D'Oliveira's inclusion in the England team to tour his country in 1968-69 led to the abandonment of the tour and started South Africa's sports exile.

In his speech of welcome, Bacher perhaps overstated his case by describing D'Oliveira as "one of the most famous people in South Africa's non-racial society", for D'Oliveira has not returned to live in his native land since he left for England in 1960. Indeed, this visit, as a guide to a group of England supporters, is only his fourth time back.

Bacher said that South Africa regarded D'Oliveira as one of its greatest sporting sons. "Although we know you have affiliations with English cricket, and respect them, we also know that deep down we will always regard you as South African. Thank you for transforming this society."



Adams, the Cape Coloured who followed D'Oliveira in playing for St Augustine's, can enjoy a prominent role in South Africa's future

D'Oliveira was then presented with a tie and cuff-links by Kris Mackerdun, the president of the UCBSA, who, in doing so, said "welcome back to the soil that bred you".

D'Oliveira, looking youthful for his 64 years and characteristically wearing a Worcestershire blazer, was too overcome by emotion to respond publicly, but said later that he was surprised and pleased by the board's gesture. He said that it showed that finally "it is finished, it is all over now".

It was entirely appropriate that South Africa's team in this match should contain a Cape Coloured in Paul Adams, who, as chance would have it, also plays for the St Augustine's club. It had been hoped D'Oliveira could meet Nelson Mandela, the President of South Africa, but it proved difficult. Adams met Mandela at an airport base on Monday, the president saying that the teenager had "aroused South African national pride more than words can say".

The last match D'Oliveira watched at Newlands was a Test match involving Australia in 1958. He watched the game from the small grass

verge that constituted the non-whites area of the ground. He never played in a match on the ground himself. Having moved to England, he appeared in the Lancashire leagues and for Worcestershire before playing 44 Test matches for England between 1966 and 1972.

D'Oliveira said that he had been greeted by many people on his visit. "All sorts of people have come up to me in the street and thanked me," he said. "Only the other day, I was sitting at a table at the Water Front and a white man came up to me and said that he wanted to meet me. I asked him why. 'Because you're Basil D'Oliveira, aren't you?' he said. 'I want to thank you for all you've done for us.'"

As he spoke, the match resumed after lunch. Donald bowled his first over and promptly took the wickets of Thorpe and Hick. D'Oliveira became enraptured by the South African's wonderful fast bowling skills. Suddenly a thought flashed across the mind. "You're not supporting them these days, are you?"

He smiled. "No, no," he said. "I'm still on England's side."



D'Oliveira, the England player, coaching youngsters in Cape Town in 1966

Sri Lanka ready to risk Muralitharan

BY OUR SPORTS STAFF

SRI LANKA are likely to play their controversial off spinner, Muralitharan, in the World Series Cup game against the West Indies in Hobart today, even though he was no-balled seven times for throwing in the second Test against Australia in Melbourne on Boxing Day. He has already been named in the party for next month's World Cup in India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

Darrell Hair, the Australian umpire who called Muralitharan from the

bowler's end at Melbourne, will not be on duty in Tasmania and Duleep Mendis, the team manager, said yesterday that the bowler was likely to play.

Sri Lanka beat West Indies in their first meeting in the competition in Adelaide last month, but West Indies are improving and are desperate for a win to remain in contention for the finals.

"We've started to play a bit better," their coach, Andy Roberts, said, "but we must get back into a winning mode. The Sri Lankans are sure to play hard. They are a good

team. They used to be a pushover for everybody, but not any more."

Before the start whether Richie Richardson, the captain, will be fit to resume. Richardson missed the last-ball defeat by Australia at Sydney on New Year's Day because of a hamstring injury. If he is unfit, Courtney Walsh will again lead the side.

Sri Lanka can go two games clear of West Indies by winning again, but Mendis sounded a note of caution. "Although we beat them in

the first game, I think it's a bit of a different side that we're going to face tomorrow," he said, adding that Arjuna Ranatunga, the captain, was unlikely to play because of his hand injury aggravated in the Melbourne Test. Prasad Wickremasinghe, one of the new-ball bowlers, is also extremely doubtful after damaging an ankle during the Australian first innings at Melbourne.

Chandika Hathurusinghe is standing by to replace Ranatunga, while Eric Upas-hante is the likely replacement for Wickremasinghe.

SNOW REPORTS

	Depth (cm)	Conditions	Runs to resort	Weather (Spm)	Last snow			
	L	U	Piste	Off/p	°C			
ANDORRA Soldeu	20	80	good powder	tar	snow	-4	2/1	
			(Good piste sking but flat light)					
AUSTRIA Lech	60	85	good powder	good	sun	-2	1/1	
			(Excellent sking everywhere but odd icy patch low down)					
Obergurgl	80	110	good powder	good	fine	-5	1/1	
			(Excellent sking conditions: no queues)					
St Anton	20	170	good	varied	tar	-2	1/1	
			(Most pistes good and being well maintained)					
Schladming	50	60	good powder	good	cloud	3	1/1	
			(Great sking continues on majority of pistes)					
Söll	25	60	good	varied	open	cloud	0	1/1
			(Great sking throughout ski-week region)					
FRANCE Alpe d'Huez	90	220	good heavy	good	fog	0	2/1	
			(Very good piste sking, avalanche risk high up)					
Les Arcs	40	185	good powder	good	cloud	-1	2/1	
			(Good powder above 1,800m, varied heavy below)					
Avoriaz	30	110	good	varied	tar	snow	-2	2/1
			(General good but less lively resorts: too wet snow)					
Flaine	30	130	good heavy	tar	snow	1	2/1	
			(Good sking but visibility poor: 11/31 lifts open)					
Tignes	100	140	good powder	good	cloud	1	2/1	
			(Excellent sking but dreadful visibility: runs quiet)					
Val d'Isère	100	180	good powder	good	cloud	3	2/1	
			(Poor visibility in most areas: avalanche danger)					
ITALY Cervinia	50	250	good powder	good	snow	2	2/1	
			(Excellent sking continues: fresh snow falling)					
SWITZERLAND C Montana	20	115	good	varied	open	snow	1	2/1
			(Good piste sking: snowing, visibility poor)					
Mürren	35	130	good powder	good	snow	-1	2/1	
			(Great snow and sking but very muted visibility)					

Source: Ski Club of Great Britain. L - lower slopes, U - upper, art - artificial

WORD WATCHING

Answers from page 40

YESSUM

(a) US dialect contraction of yes ma'am, a polite form of assent addressed to a woman. William Faulkner. Go down, Moses. 1942: "Miss Sophomora said neighbor just a half day's ride apart ought not to go so long as Uncle Buck and Uncle Buck said Yessum."

ZEDONK

(a) The offspring of a male zebra and a female donkey. The offspring of the converse parentage is a zonkey. A portmanteau word from ze(n)bra + donkey. "Donkeys crossed with zebras, sometimes called zedonks, have been used like mules as pack animals."

SPOOKIST

(a) A spiritualist or medium. A whimsical formation from spook a ghost. "A man whom I knew well was taken suddenly and seriously ill, and his relations, who were enthusiastic spookists, telegraphed for the celebrated clairvoyante Mrs Endor."

SUCUPIRA

(a) A dark brown hardwood obtained from trees of the genus *Bowdichia* or *Dipterocarpus*, both native to South America, especially Brazil, and belonging to the family Leguminosae. A Portuguese adaptation of its Tupi name. "The colossal Ceibas, para nuts and cupuipiras with their blue flowers high in the sun."

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No short cut in long war

The Code War. Radio 4, 7.45pm.

I only wish I could say that it will be as easy as falling off a log for the uninitiated to understand everything this programme says about cancer. If it had been that easy, Geoff Waits's inquiry would be highly suspect because it would have tried to make something simple out of something hideously complex. The Code War does not raise false hopes about an early victory in the war against cancer. But it does say that advances made in molecular biology do give cause for limited optimism. This is not a view shared by one eminent cancer specialist. His bleak analysis throws a smothering blanket over the gleams of hope in the programme's closing minutes.

Hearts and Hands and Voices. Radio 2, 9.00pm.

Could it be that what gave Radio 2 the idea for Barbara Dickson's five-part history of hymns was the unexpected success of the recent recording of Gregorian chant by the monks of Silchester? Whatever the inspiration behind Dickson's series, it has produced excellent fruit. Part one is, admittedly, a bit of a gallop through hymnology, from medieval plainsong to the Welsh rugby fans' anthem, *Bread of Heaven*. In the process, Dickson throws a fascinating musical bridge between a "sit-in" staged by a Milanese bishop and his flock and the Victorian hymn *O Splendour of God's Glory Bright*. Where else could this strongly vocal series have been produced but in Wales, the land of song? Peter Daville

RADIO 1

FM Stereo. 4.00pm Chris Warren 5.00
Chris Evans 5.00 Kevin Greening 12.00
Jo White, Inc 12.30pm Newsbeat and
1.15 The Net 2.00 Nicky Campbell 4.00
Mark Goodier, Inc at 5.30 Newsbeat
7.00 Evening Session 8.00 Radio 1
Top with Kid Tempo and the Ginger
Prince 10.00 Mark Radcliffe, 12.00
Wendy Lloyd, Inc at 12.15pm The Net

RADIO 2

FM Stereo. 6.00pm Sarah Kennedy
6.15 Pause for Thought 7.30 Wogan
8.15 Pause for Thought 8.30 Brian
Matthew, Inc at 10.00 Pick of the Hits
11.30 Jimmy Young 2.00pm Debbie
Theroux 3.30 Ed Stewart 5.05 John
Dunn 7.00 Jim Lloyd 8.00 Over the
Water 8.30 Black presents Irish music
(4/4) 8.30 Mrs Adcock Explains Her
Roots 9.00 Hearts and Hands and
Voices. See Choice 9.30 Nigel Ogden
10.30 The Jamieson 12.00pm Adrian
Ferguson 3.00 Steve Madden

RADIO 5 LIVE

5.00 Morning Reports 6.00 The Break-
fast Programme 6.30 The Magazine
12.00 Middle with Mark and at 1.15 Sports
Moneycheck, and at 1.15 Entertainment
News 2.05 Ruocco on Five, Inc at 3.45
Entertainment News 4.00 John Inverdale
National News 7.00 News. Eon with
Victoria Sanderson 7.35 Sporting Gossip
2.00 Trevor Brooking's Football Night.
Celtic v Rangers 10.05 News Talk 11.00
Night Extra, with Victoria Sanderson
12.00am After Hours, with Vincent
Harris 2.05 Up All Night

TALK RADIO

6.00am Sandy Watt 7.00 Simon Bates
10.00 Jonathan King 12.00 Tommy
Bowl 2.00pm Anna Rutherford 4.00 Scott
Christoph and Low Turner 7.00 Sean
Boiger 8.00 Moz Dee 10.00 James
White 1.00-4.00pm Ian Collins

RADIO 3

6.00am On Air, with Andrew
McGregor. Rachmaninov (O
gladness light; Nunc dimittis;
Vespers); Strauss (Don Juan);
Haydn (Concerto in E flat for
two horns); Copland
(Appalachian Spring);
Gottschalk (Trumpet
Concerto No 1 in D);
(Piano Concerto No 1 in D
flat)
9.00 Morning Collection with
Paul Gambardell. Haydn
(Piano Trio in E flat minor);
Puccini (Il ballo del
Dorotea, La Rondine); Bach
(Schubert Suite No 3 in D);
Stravinsky (Concerto for piano
and wind)
10.00 Musical Encounters, with
Chris Wiles. Haydn
(Symphony No 26 in D
minor); Liszt (Totentanz);
Geazy (Etude sur le soufflet);
Handel (Zefireto, the score
notated, Gagliardi);
Beethoven (String Quartet in
E flat); Monneger (Danse des
châliques); Vaughan Williams
(Symphony No 6)
12.00 Composer of the Week:
Elgar. Penny Gore examines
the composer's personality.
Sun Dance, Wand of Youth
Suite No 1; Overture, Alassio,
in the South; Violin Concerto,
slow movement; Symphony
No 2, third movement (i)
1.00pm News 1.05 Birmingham
Lunchtime Concert, Robert
Cohen, cello, Elizabeth
Barley, piano, perform Miklos
Rozsa (Duo, Op 8);
Beethoven (Sonata in A, Op
89); Fauré (Après un rêve,
Papillons)
2.00 The BBC Orchestra, The
BBC Philharmonic under
Gernot Roshchinsky

RADIO 4

5.55am Shipping (LW only) 6.00
News 6.10 Farming Today
6.25 Prayer for the Day 6.30
Today, Inc 6.30, 7.00, 7.30,
8.00, 8.30 News 8.55, 7.55
Weather 7.55, 8.55
7.45 Thought for the Day
8.40 Harvest of the Cold
Months, by Elizabeth David
(3/5) 8.55 Weather
9.00 News 9.05 Midweek, with
Times columnist Libby Purves
and guests
9.00-10.00, 11.00-4.00pm Test
Match Special (LW only).
South Africa v England in the
5th Test
10.00-10.30 News: A Good Read
(FM only), with Susan Hill,
Joanna Lumley and Rory Stuart
10.00 Daily Service (LW only)
10.15 Children's BBC Radio 4
(LW only). Richard Tate reads
the Never Gated Fire
Cabbages Twice, by
Catherine Kintz
NB. The following are on FM only
10.30 Women's Hour. Kathleen
Griffin reviews the life and
work of the artist Gluck
Gardener's Question Time
from the House of the Mearns
Agricultural Club,
Launceston (i)
12.00 News. You and Yours
12.25pm Bookclub Hall. An
18th-century sketch written
by Scott Chery (2/6) 12.55
Weather
1.00 The World at One (FM, LW)
1.40 The Archers 1.55 Shipping
Forecast
2.00 News Overheard. A thriller
by Tony McPhee. Abbie is
concerned when she
overhears her husband
Patrick's conversation on the
phone (i)
2.45 Letters from Here and
There. Beryl Bainbridge
writes from Egypt (i/6)
3.00 News. The Afternoon Shift
4.00 News 4.05 Kaleidoscope
5.00 News 5.05 Shipping
5.55 Weather
6.00 News 6.30 and the
Willow's Sound of Music
7.00 News 7.05 The Archers
7.20 Face the Facts. New series
with John Wals
7.45 The Code War. See Choice
8.30 The Spirit of America: The
Montgomery Bus Boycott,
1955. More than 40 years
ago, Rosa Parks refused to
give up her seat to a white
man on a bus in Alabama.
Now in her eighties, she
reflects on her defiant act
which marked the beginning
of the civil rights movement
5.00 Flashpoints. Professor John
Dunn reviews the butterfly
effect and the theory of chaos
9.30 Kaleidoscope (i) 9.55
Weather
10.00 The World Tonight, with
Owen Bennett Jones
10.45 Book at Bedtime: The
Harpole Report. AL Carr's
comic classic (3/10)
11.00 Truist. First part of Wendy
Lee's satire
11.30 Barbs London. Comedy
sketches (i)
12.00 News, Inc 12.27am Weather
12.30 The Late Book: Miles
Smith's Feeling for Snow,
by Peter Hood. Read by
Sobhan Radmond (13/15)
12.48 Shipping Forecast 1.00 Am
World Service

FREQUENCY GUIDE. RADIO 1, FM 97.6-99.8. RADIO 2, FM 80.0-90.2. RADIO 3, FM 90.2-92.4. RADIO 4, FM 82.4-84.6. LW 198: MW 720. RADIO 5, LW 680, 908, 1068. SERVICE. MW 648: LW 198 (12.45-5.55am). CLASSIC FM, FM 100-102. VIRGIN RADIO, FM 105.5, MW 1197, 1215. TALK RADIO UK, MW 1053, 1089. Television and radio listings compiled by Peter Dear, Gillian Mackay, Rosemary Smith and Susan Thomson

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Local knowledge of a pleasingly arcane kind

The scene is Clifton Suspension Bridge. A stocky, middle-aged man in fluorescent cycling gear crouches excitedly on the footpath, demonstrating a 19th-century patent tea-urn while cars swish past behind. One's heart swells with borrowed pride. This could only be England! It is raining, too? The urn is a fantastically useful device, combining tea-making, toast-warming, and egg-boiling. Extraordinary that it never caught on, really. But why this larky site for its revival? Well, the woman who supplied this tea-urn, Sarah Currey, also invented the suspension bridge, patenting it in 1811. At this date, Isambard Kingdom Brunel was a mere infant who couldn't tell his girders from his joists.

There is never a shortage of cycling buffons in this country, so I've no idea whether Adam Hart-Davis is already a big star who also plays the kazoo. But he was

excellent value in *Local Heroes* last night on BBC2. The idea of the series — which is too vaguely titled — is that each week, Hart-Davis cycles to a region and uncovers the forgotten genius of its home-grown inventors and scientific pioneers. Last night the South West provided Humphrey (It's a Gas) Davy and Edward (This Won't Hurt a Bit) Jenner, but also the less-remembered William Watts, a plumber born in 1750 who invented a method for creating lead shot.

Game for anything (of course), Hart-Davis replicated Watts's original experiment, pouring molten lead from a great height and hoping it would turn into solid spherical droplets in the course of its descent. Still clad in the fluorescent gear — and with his bright pink helmet evoking happy memories of Wallace in *A Close Shave* on Christmas Eve — Hart-Davis was elevated in a giant

cherry-picker along with a handy portable lead-boiler and an old frying-pan with a hole in it.

Better television it would be hard to find, in my opinion. Hart-Davis poured the lead into the frying-pan and called out "Clear below!" — a lovely touch. And then the lead came down in rain-drops. *Local Heroes* is an enriching sort of programme, especially for connoisseurs of arcane information. Watch *Local Heroes* and, if nothing else, you will be armed with excellent gambits for dinner-party conversations such as "I bet you don't know how lead shot is manufactured?"

Such child-like excitement in a clever man on a bike was in stark contrast to the dull, phlegmatic children in two new dramas yesterday. In the spooky new children's serial *The Demon Headmaster* (BBC1), the children are subjected to mass hypnosis — a rather brilliant paranoid conceit

REVIEW



Lynne Truss

on the part of Gillian Cross, the story's original author (it is adapted by Helen Crosswell). These pupils parade noiselessly in smart green blazers, and when asked "How's school?" they reply in zomboid tones. "The headmaster is a marvellous man, and this is the best school I've ever been to."

What a cracking idea. Why aren't all schools run in this fashion? Apparently the parents

never smell the proverbial rodent, even when the children run in their own socks. But five plucky "normal" have mysteriously escaped the headmaster's net, and a new girl, Dinah, may join them. On her first day she was hypnotised at once, but she is an intelligent child and is therefore alarmed at the sound of unexpected opinions issuing from her own mouth. What is the headmaster's cunning plan, however? If he only intends to plant French verbs in his pupils' sub-conscious, I say good luck.

But around the school may be seen Orwell-type posters. "Forge a single will out of the will of many", for example. So there is probably more to it than learning the kings and queens of England by rote. Whenever the headmaster (Terence Hardiman) removes his tinted spectacles, his eyes emit concentric pulses, rather like the snake in Disney's *Jungle Book*. "Funny you should feel so tired so

early in the morning," he says. Such a gift may also be a curse, of course. Imagine his visits to the optician, if every time he removes his specs people fall back glassy with their gobs open.

Finally, the drear siblings *From Next of Kin* (BBC1) returned last night for a second series. Unmotherly Maggie (Penelope Keith) and easy-going husband Andrew (William Gaunt) have now adopted their joyless grandchildren. Maggie does not like young people: in particular she dislikes the swamish vegan Georgia (Ann Coddling, who last night received a trifle in the face — in the manner of a custard pie). Such violence was a surprise only to those who had missed the trailers, in which the incident featured heavily.

Last night's lame story concerned two plot-lines, both of which were so predictable I nearly

burst into tears. First, Maggie saw in Georgia's private diary "It was my birthday today and nobody remembered". While granny then struggled to make an acceptably holistic birthday tea, the viewer had ample time not only to reach the conclusion "It's probably a trick", but to amble around it enough times to get sick of the sight of it. Similarly the smaller child's requirement of a locust-outfit ("Jake has to be a locust by Thursday") culminated in a real knock-em-dead narrative twist when it transpired that the locust outfit was required for next Thursday.

Next of Kin is a Penelope Keith vehicle whose epithet "popular" is so mysterious that it can only be attributable to sinister mass hypnosis. So if you hear anyone say, "Penelope Keith is marvellous," and Next of Kin is the best sitcom I've ever seen," back away slowly and then make a run for it.

BBC1

- 6.00am Business Breakfast (12088)
- 7.00 BBC Breakfast News (92465970)
- 8.05 Global Catchup. Holland (s) Last in series. (4717890)
- 9.30 The Stone Protectors (s) (80796)
- 10.00 News regional news and weather (1744195)
- 10.05 Can't Cook, Won't Cook (s) (8610796)
- 10.30 Good Morning with Anne and Nick (s) (19860)
- 12.00 News (s) (8610796)
- 12.05pm The 12.05pm Radio 4 News from Nashville, with Chel Adams and Tammy Wynette (s) (9987883)
- 12.50 Regional News and weather (13690338)
- 1.00 One O'Clock News (Cesfax) and weather (46203)
- 1.30 Neighbours (Cesfax) (s) (84751884)
- 1.50 Hawkeye (s) (1286338)
- 2.35 Holiday (s) (4905241)
- 3.05 Timekeepers (s) (5111583)
- 3.30 Moomin (s) (1415884) 3.50 Dharma (s) 4.10 Rugrats (s) (4263331) 4.35 Agent Z and the Penguin from Mars (Cesfax) (s) (9475593)
- 5.00 Newsround (Cesfax) (4840715)
- 5.10 Blue Peter. Live events and news reports. (Cesfax) (7081406)
- 5.35 Neighbours (s) (Cesfax) (s) (238609)
- 6.00 Six O'Clock News (Cesfax) and weather (39)
- 6.30 Regional News magazines (51)
- 7.00 This Is Your Life. Michael Aspel reviews the life of another top celebrity from the world of entertainment, the arts, or charity work (Cesfax) (s) (8262)
- 7.30 May to December. Generation-gap sit-com (s) (Cesfax) (48)
- 8.00 Paul Daniels' Secrets. Paul Daniels tries to trick viewers and celebrities at the world's most amazing nightclub (Cesfax) (s) (565154)
- 8.50 Points of View. Anne Robinson opens the mailbags with more viewers' reaction to BBC programmes (Cesfax) (s) (896408)
- 9.00 Nine O'Clock News (Cesfax) regional news and weather (5715)
- 9.30 **Choice** Hetty Wainthropp Investigates. (Cesfax) (s) (2693845)
- 10.40 Inside Story. The Silent Twin — Without My Shadow. The story of identical twins June and Jennifer Gibbons, whose love-hate relationship, drove them to arson and a spell in Broadmoor Hospital. However, Jennifer died mysteriously on the day they left Broadmoor and her sister June tells her extraordinary story. (s) (Cesfax) (s) (588392)
- 11.35 **FILM:** The House on Carroll Street (1988) starring Kelly McGillis and Jeff Daniels. Thriller set in 1950s New York, with reporter Kelly McGillis numbering across a sinister government plot to hire Nazi intellectuals. Trained by an FBI man she begins her quest to unravel the web of corruption and reveal the truth to a largely ignorant populace. Directed by Peter Yates (898086)
- 1.15am Weather (2537818)

BBC2

- 7.00am Breakfast News (Signed) (6700883)
- 7.15 Lassie (s) (3824661) 7.40 Albert the 8th Musketeer (s) (Cesfax) (798818) 8.05 Take Two (s) (Cesfax) (s) (5931932)
- 8.35 **FILM:** Tennessee's Partner (1955, b/w) starring John Payne and Ronald Reagan. Western drama directed by Allan Dwan (8805970) 10.00 Playdays (861067)
- 10.25 **FILM:** Grand Central Murder (1942, b/w) starring Van Heflin. A private eye takes up the case of a beautiful actress found murdered in a train. Directed by S. Sylvan Simon (7885563)
- 11.35 The Fugitive (b/w) (Cesfax) (1336651)
- 12.30pm Working Lunch (82154)
- 1.00 Melvin and Maureen's Music-a-Grama (s) (s) (7315992)
- 1.20 **FILM:** Go Naked in the World (1961) starring Gena Lollobrigida and Anthony Franciosa. The son of an industrialist falls in love with a prostitute. Directed by Ronald MacDougall (43948203)
- 3.00 News (Cesfax), regional news and weather, followed by 1998 World Professional Darts Championship. Includes News at 3.55 (822311)
- 6.00 Star Trek: Next Generation. (Cesfax) (s) (887095)
- 6.45 Buck Rogers in the 25th Century. (s) (702777)
- 7.30 The House Detectives. The delights and wonders of an apparently ordinary Victorian house. (s) (15)
- 8.00 University Challenge. With Jeremy Paxman. St Andrews University v Imperial College, London (Cesfax) (s) (7512)
- 8.30 Della Smith's top ten casseroles (8.30pm)
- 8.30 Della Smith's Winter Collection. Another selection of hot recipes. (Cesfax) (s) (3319)
- 9.00 Victoria Wood As Seen On TV (s) (Cesfax) (7357)
- 9.30 Modern Times: The Fame Game — Update. An update version of the documentary about Liz Brewer. London's top society "ladies" to the rich who want to be famous. (Cesfax) (s) (756056)
- 10.20 **NEW** What the Papers Say. A review of the week's news as reported in the press. (862796)
- 10.30 Newsnight. (303338)
- 11.15 1998 World Professional Darts Championship (419332)
- 12.15am Weather (3293891)
- 12.20 **FILM:** Les Enfants Du Paradis. Part 1: The Boulevard of Crime (1945, b/w). A classic French drama starring Aletty, Jean-Louis Barault and Pierre Brasseur, directed by Marcel Carné. Continues tomorrow. In French with English subtitles (504655). Ends at 2.10
- VideoPlace and the Video PlusCode. The numbers to go with each TV programme. VideoPlace is a video recorder which can be used with a video recorder. VideoPlus is a video recorder which can be used with a video recorder. VideoPlace and VideoPlus are trademarks of Gornet Development Ltd.

CHOICE

- Hetty Wainthropp Investigates: The Bearded Lady BBC1, 9.30pm
- The achievement of television's newest detective series is to mix the realistic and the unbelievable and get away with it. The authenticity is in the grim northern settings and the portrait of an elderly couple struggling to live on the husband's redundancy money. The show makes our own Casualty seem positively laboured. Which is not to say that Hetty is a comfortable evening's entertainment. There is too much blood and suffering for that, and the camera is never shy of showing it to us in lurid close-up. But relieving humour is thankfully never far away, with the hapless young student doctor Carter on the receiving end and a jolly researcher, sent to Dublin to check the story out. Eamon Holmes, who's recent credits appropriately include *Do They Do That?*, is the host of a pilot that seems certain to make a series.
- Back to the Present ITV, 7.00pm (Scottish, Friday 5.00pm)
- Paula Hamilton is famous for appearing in a Volkswagen commercial, though it was eight years ago. She has since been in a film with Elizabeth Hurley. Her current claim on our attention is her conviction that she has been on this planet before. Enter Laura Levoy, a hypnotist and expert in something called past-life regression. Putting Hamilton under his spell, he gets her to imagine that she is living in the 19th century as a baker in Dublin. Or is it more than imagination? Esther McVeigh, a jolly researcher, is sent to Dublin to check the story out. Eamon Holmes, who's recent credits appropriately include *Do They Do That?*, is the host of a pilot that seems certain to make a series.
- Repeat prescription for the Chicago medics (C4, 10pm)
- E.R.: Welcome Back, Carter Channel 4, 10.00pm
- The Chicago-based hospital drama returns for a new series, with no let up in pace or energy. At this rate the frenetic medics will soon be in need of care themselves. The blood pressure count must be horrendous. The show makes our own Casualty seem positively laboured. Which is not to say that E.R. is a comfortable evening's entertainment. There is too much blood and suffering for that, and the camera is never shy of showing it to us in lurid close-up. But relieving humour is thankfully never far away, with the hapless young student doctor Carter on the receiving end and a jolly researcher, sent to Dublin to check the story out. Eamon Holmes, who's recent credits appropriately include *Do They Do That?*, is the host of a pilot that seems certain to make a series.
- Travelog Channel 4, 8.30pm
- There are holidays and there is travel, and the two should never be confused. Television knows the difference, sending Jill Dando and Judith Chalmers on holiday and leaving Ray, a more individual pursuit, in this admirable programme. Ray McCarty kicks off the new series in Key West, Florida, joining the annual celebration of its most famous resident, Ernest Hemingway. His spirit is invoked in arm wrestling and heavy drinking and a lookalike contest which attracts more than 90 grizzled old men with white beards. McCarty provides a suitably quizzical commentary. In the other item, Chicago's medics go to Naples for a discourse on opera, pizza, and a lottery going back to 1570.

CARLTON

- 6.00am GMTV (2260680)
- 9.25 Win, Lose or Draw (s) (4713574)
- 9.55 London Today (Teletext) (8696118)
- 10.00 The Time... The Place (s) (1480512)
- 10.35 This Morning including 1.00 ITN News headlines and regional news (57601222)
- 12.20pm London Today followed by London Weather (Teletext) (8745681)
- 12.30 ITN News and weather (Teletext) (6059683)
- 12.55 Home and Away (Teletext) (6034574)
- 1.25 Chain Letters (Teletext) (3249319)
- 1.55 Shortland Street (Teletext) (84756319)
- 2.50 Vanessa (Teletext) (s) (18489067)
- 2.50 Material World: Heart and Soul (4965693)
- 3.20 ITN News headlines (Teletext) (2649067)
- 3.25 London Today (Teletext) (2647338)
- 3.30 Potamus Park (s) (2461425) 3.40 Wizards (s) (s) (7052048) 3.50 The Twisted Tales of Felix the Cat (1420756) 4.10 Tenor Towers (580241)
- 4.40 **NEW** David Waver: A Twist of Lemming. With Cambridge researcher Dr Ruby Munro (7183959)
- 5.10 After 5 with Carol Keating (Teletext) (Followed by the Missing Film) (5626048)
- 5.40 ITN News and weather (Teletext) (584226)
- 5.55 Your Show. Viewers as their views (943951)
- 6.00 Home and Away (s) (Teletext) (77)
- 6.30 London Tonight (Teletext) (57)
- 7.00 **Choice** Back to the Present (5390)
- 7.30 Coronation Street. Don pays a visit to his solicitor (Teletext) (41)
- 8.00 Des O'Connor Tonight with José Carreras. Brian Conley and Wei Wei Wei (s) (2390)
- 9.00 **FILM:** Final Analysis (1992) starring Richard Gere, Kim Basinger, Uma Thurman and Eric Roberts. A psychiatrist's clandestine affair with the sister of a client becomes complicated when she appears in court charged with murder. Directed by Phil Joanou (s) (2154) Continues after the news
- 10.00 ITN News at Ten and weather (Teletext) (39338)
- 10.30 London Tonight (Teletext)
- 10.40 **FILM:** Final Analysis continued (1392357)
- 12.00 Tales From the Crypt: Season (45094)
- 12.30 **NEW** God's Gift. "Raunchy" dating show with David McCall (55620)
- 1.30 **NEW** Dear Nick. Nick Fisher discusses one-night stands (61075)
- 2.30am **FILM:** Wolf of Death (1950, b/w). Thriller starring Maxwell Reed, Susan Shaw, Laurence Harvey, Gloria Bryan and Sidney Teller. Directed by Lewis Gilbert (41549)
- 4.05 **NEW** Jones and Jury Real legal disputes (18028075)
- 4.30 Dead Men's Tales (5823278)
- 4.55 The Time... The Place (s) (1948691)
- 5.30 ITN Morning News (46723). Ends at 6.00

CHANNEL 4

- 8.35am Think Tank with Mickey Hutton (s) (5340845)
- 7.00 The Big Breakfast (69154)
- 9.00 The Golden Girls (s) (Teletext) (s) (49715)
- 9.30 Stand Still, Be Fr (s) (Teletext) (s) (3854932)
- 9.45 The Daily Telegraph Junior Golfer of the Year from the Clonier course in Georgia (6307116)
- 10.50 **FILM:** Dante's Inferno (1935, b/w). Adaptation of the famous verses, starring Spencer Tracy as a laundromat worker who finds himself in Hell. Directed by Harry Lachman (5339154)
- 12.30pm Sesame Street (48777) 1.30 Madeline (s) (55593) 2.00 Tulpas Shall Grow (6144799)
- 2.05 **FILM:** City for Conquest (1941, b/w). James Cagney plays a New York trucker who takes up boxing to win girlfriend Ann Sheridan. Directed by Anatole Litvak (456951)
- 4.00 Backdate with Valerie Singleton (70)
- 4.30 Countdown with Richard Whitley (Teletext) (s) (54)
- 5.00 Ricki Lake. Ricki chats to overweight women (Teletext) (s) (7674970)
- 5.45 Terrypions followed by Murun Buchansangur. (824748)
- 6.00 The Crystal Maze (s) (Teletext) (s) (65241)
- 7.00 Channel 4 News, including headlines and weather at 7.30 (504232) 7.55 The Slot (521845)
- 8.00 Brookside (Teletext) (s) (2680)
- 8.30 **Choice** Travelog. Pola McCarthy visits Key West, Florida (Teletext) (s) (1715)
- 9.00 Riding the Storm: How to Tell Lies and Win Wars. Award-winning journalist Maggie O'Kane travels to Iraq and America to discover the real story behind the Gulf War, including how the coalition forces tested new weapons in the battlefield. (Teletext) (3336)
- 10.00 **Choice** E.R.: Welcome Back, Carter (Teletext) (s) (334048)
- 10.55 Friends. The comedy pilot that introduced six single twentysomethings, all at various stages in the dating game and the career race, who share each other's apartments, problems, time and clothes. (s) (Teletext) (s) (312135)
- 11.25 MovieWatch. Film magazine series Johnny Vaughan interviews Julia Roberts about her new film, Something to Talk About (s) (263657)
- 12.05am Real Money. A drama set in both the real and fictional world of boxing. Real because the parts are played by fighters and the boxing fraternity who appeared in *Fighters*, fiction because this is a drama that follows the lives of young boxer Bobby Kane (Mark Tibbs) and Terry (Steve Roberts) as they train under the discipline of Roy Kane (real life trainer Jimmy Tibbs). (Teletext) (s) (2551568)
- 1.30 **FILM:** The Boy from Oklahoma (1954) Will Rogers Jr stars as a gentle sheriff who discovers that the mayor (Lon Chaney Jr) is a secret killer. Directed by Michael Curtiz. (370617)
- 3.05 **FILM:** Die Rebellion. A disabled soldier plays a barrel-organ in the streets for a living but has to face the true nature of his final judgment. An Australian drama with Brad Pitt, David Hemmings and Terry Van Welyke. In German with subtitles. (458839). Ends at 5.05

VARIATIONS

- ANGLIA**
As London except 9.55am-10.00am Anglia News (6606115) 12.30pm-12.35pm Anglia News (6606115) 12.35pm-12.40pm Anglia News (6606115) 1.25pm-1.30pm Anglia News (6606115) 1.30pm-1.35pm Anglia News (6606115) 1.35pm-1.40pm Anglia News (6606115) 1.40pm-1.45pm Anglia News (6606115) 1.45pm-1.50pm Anglia News (6606115) 1.50pm-1.55pm Anglia News (6606115) 1.55pm-2.00pm Anglia News (6606115) 2.00pm-2.05pm Anglia News (6606115) 2.05pm-2.10pm Anglia News (6606115) 2.10pm-2.15pm Anglia News (6606115) 2.15pm-2.20pm Anglia News (6606115) 2.20pm-2.25pm Anglia News (6606115) 2.25pm-2.30pm Anglia News (6606115) 2.30pm-2.35pm Anglia News (6606115) 2.35pm-2.40pm Anglia News (6606115) 2.40pm-2.45pm Anglia News (6606115) 2.45pm-2.50pm Anglia News (6606115) 2.50pm-2.55pm Anglia News (6606115) 2.55pm-3.00pm Anglia News (6606115) 3.00pm-3.05pm Anglia News (6606115) 3.05pm-3.10pm Anglia News (6606115) 3.10pm-3.15pm Anglia News (6606115) 3.15pm-3.20pm Anglia News (6606115) 3.20pm-3.25pm Anglia News (6606115) 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44
RUGBY UNION 41
WINNINGTON PARK
SUPPLY ROMANCE
TO PILKINGTON CUP

SPORT

WEDNESDAY JANUARY 3 1996

SIMON BARNES 41
ATHERTON FALLS
VICTIM TO
AN OLD ENEMY

Inept batting after Atherton's early departure gives South Africa control Donald derails England at speed

FROM ALAN LEE, CRICKET CORRESPONDENT, IN CAPE TOWN

CAPE TOWN (first day of five, England won toss): South Africa, with eight first-innings wickets in hand, are 109 runs behind England.

MICHAEL ATHERTON did everything right yesterday morning, but only until this decisive final Test began. He had made a positive selection and he had won the toss, but the England captain was then out for nought and, as tends to happen whenever he fails, his team simply withered away without him.

England will not be despairing just yet, for this is a fickle Newlands pitch that is unlikely to last five days. South Africa, having lost two wickets to the indefatigable Dominic Cork in the final hour, will be aware that they still have much to do. All that can be said with confidence after the opening day is that this series is now most unlikely to end drawn.

Andy Atkinson's pitch, almost bare and widely cracked, will assuredly deteriorate in the coming days. Indeed, Robin Smith, who sustained England for four hours, said later that he believed 170 would be a difficult fourth-innings target. But it was not, yesterday, a

surface on which it was forgivable to be bowled out for 153, even when confronted by Allan Donald at his most formidable.

It was, perhaps, a hundred runs short of par. Apart from a rare and welcome burst of productivity from the previously plagued No 3 position, in which Smith, his notorious nerves benefiting from the promotion, made a valiant 66, England batted limply when, with only five specialists, they could least afford it.

Donald's five wickets, com-

D'Oliveira returns 42
Muralidharan plays 42

pensation for his scant rewards in Port Elizabeth, included Atherton and the vital elimination of Graham Thorpe and Graeme Hick in a single over after lunch. Paul Adams took the last two wickets and caused enough problems through turn and variation to suggest there will be more to come. Smith was no nearer picking his chinaman when he departed, having played on to one, than he had been at the start of his innings.

The problems of predicting England's spin bowling are concerned more with its quality. Richard Illingworth, who is nothing if not dependable, was duly ruled unfit yesterday morning and Mike Watkinson, who deputises, cannot afford the generosity of length he has shown so far on this tour. England have too few runs with which to bargain, a fate that was their destiny as soon as Atherton fell without a run on the board.

Atherton's wish for the national anthem to be played before a game was again answered, this time with the teams lined up in blazers on their balconies, many of them singing. It was not, however, inspirational and six fraught maiden overs preceded Atherton's calamitous end, going back to Donald and angling the ball low to third slip.

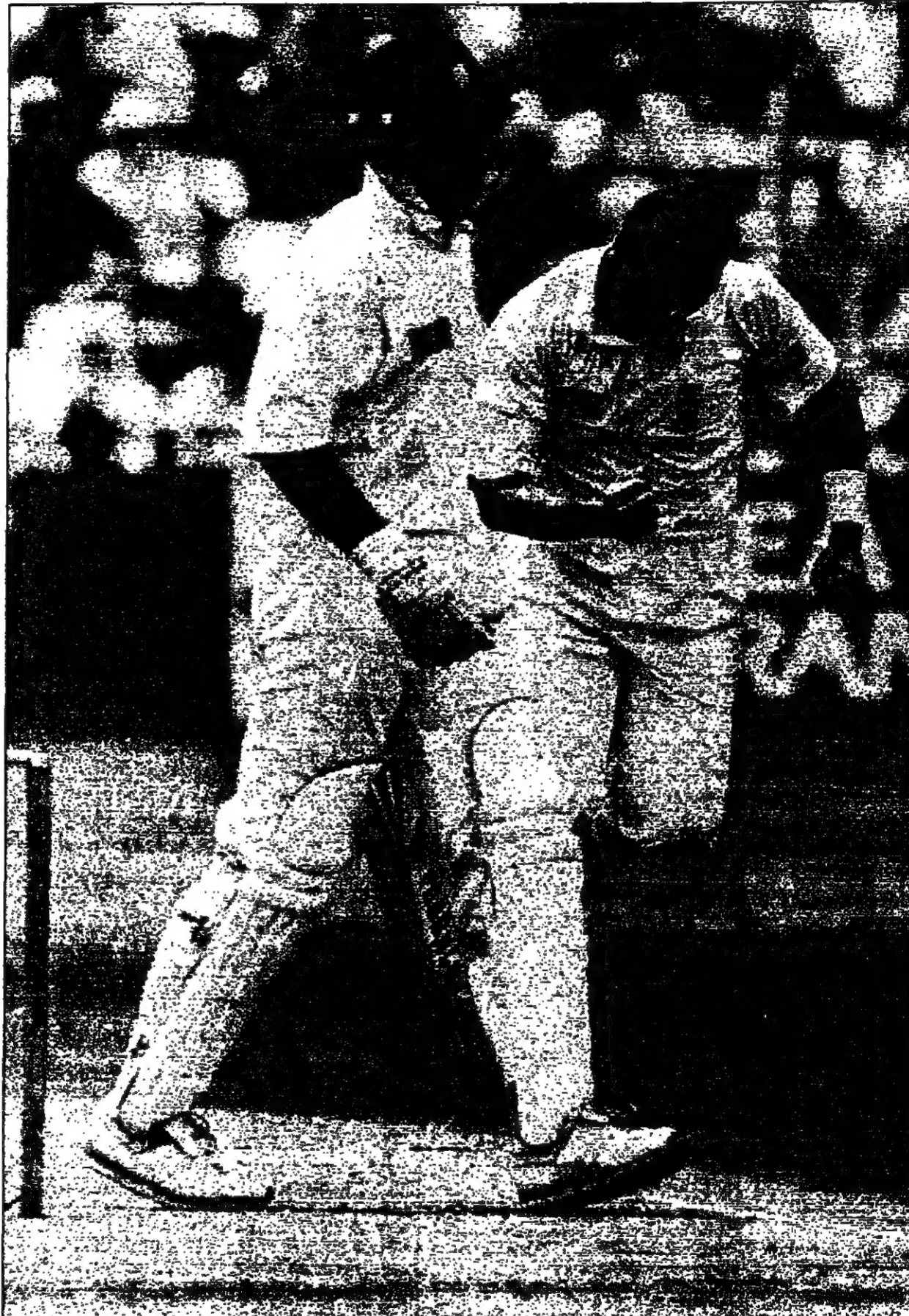
The field for Donald, which at one stage had nobody in front of square, was a strange contrast with the ambivalent fields for Pollock, but the advent of McMillan, gaining swing and extra bounce, persuaded Cronje to attack. Stewart, becalmed as he so hates to be, was bowled off the inside edge as he pushed away from his body and England, already in disarray, were now faced with a gladiatorial roar for the introduction of Adams.

The gates had been closed before play began and, for many of the locals, Adams was the principal draw. In his third over, he demonstrated the influence he might have on the match, leaving Smith helplessly squarred up with a ball that pitched on middle stump and turned past off. Somehow, Smith and Thorpe saw it through to lunch, but, in the second over of the afternoon, the innings was undermined.

Donald's first ball of the session was angled across the left-handed Thorpe, whose drive was loose and presumptuous, a careless end to a promising innings. McMillan pocketed it at second slip, and caught another three balls later, when Hick, driven back by a short one, offered a drooping bat, an old habit he had shunned on this tour.

Four of the five selected batsmen had thus mustered 35 runs between them. This was not an endorsement of the decision to shorten the batting but neither did it condemn it, for a management cannot legislate for its best players performing so ineptly. Jack Russell enjoys a scalp, but even he must have hoped to enter the fray at something more amenable than 60 for four.

Russell fussed protectively for 80 minutes, eyes hawkishly fixed on every ball, but he had scored only nine of a stand of 43 when he nibbled fatally outside off stump to give McMillan his third catch and Pollock his first wicket. In his next over, Pollock struck again, convincing umpire Or-



Hick turns away in despair, dismissed by a delighted Donald at Newlands yesterday. Photograph: Derek Cox

chard that a full-length ball to Watkinson would have hit leg stump. Cork, like Watkinson before him, connected with some uncomplicated blows without suggesting he would be requiring an overnight stay and it was just after tea when Donald returned once more to scatter his stumps with the perfect yorker. Tactics changed for Martin, who was unceremoniously roughed up before gloving a catch to gully, but conspicuously softened for Malcolm. For some reason, Donald seemed reluctant to

upset him. He need not have worried, for Malcolm obligingly swung a foot inside Adams's goatee to close the innings and then proceeded to bowl in desultory fashion, never approaching a speed and rhythm to disconcert. Here, one would have thought, was the ideal platform for him to prove that the public clamour for his inclusion was not misplaced and that the selectors had him wrong all along. So far, he has achieved only the opposite. Cork, meanwhile, continues

to carry the England attack, which made a collision with Watkinson in the second over, and a break for treatment to his left index finger, a deeply worrying interlude. Undeterred, he worsened the record of Hudson — now 127 runs in ten innings against England — with an inswinger and moved one the other way to have the equally disorientated Cronje caught behind. The in-form South Africans, Kirsten and Collinson, resume this morning and England cannot permit them to take root.

Stewart and Ford link to form new grand prix racing team

FROM OLIVER HOLT IN DETROIT

JACKIE STEWART, Britain's most successful Formula One motor racing driver, will end his self-imposed 22-year exile from the sport here tomorrow. Stewart, 57, will return to grand prix racing at the head of his own team in 1997 armed with a five-year plan to challenge Williams, Benetton and Ferrari for the leading prizes. The announcement will be made at the North American Motor Show here as part of a coup for the Ford Motor Company, a long-term associate of Stewart. Ford has slipped into the competitive wilderness since they won the constructors' championship with Benetton and Michael Schumacher in 1994, but its decision to give Stewart's new team an exclusive five-year supply of its most advanced engines suggests it is confident this is the way back.

Stewart won 27 grands prix in 99 races on his way to three world championships in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Only Nigel Mansell, with 31 wins, has scored more victories for Britain, but Stewart attained his total in far fewer starts. A fierce campaigner for track safety, he retired one race short of his century in 1973 after the death of his team-mate, Francois Cevert.

"I thought I would have five years to be Jackie Stewart, a racing driver, world champion, autograph signer, motor show visitor and personality," Stewart said, "but companies like Ford started to use me fairly substantially because I was a reality. My name got bigger and the reaction was getting bigger. I have not missed Formula One. Now, though, with the involvement of Ford, I am in a position where I believe there is a good chance to succeed. It will be good to be back."

Stewart has become a multi-millionaire since his retirement. He has stayed involved in racing through his son Paul and the company Paul Stewart Racing, which was successful in the junior formulas.

Ford's involvement with Stewart Grand Prix, as the company will be known, may sound the death knell for Sauber, the Swiss team, who will lose the American company's engines as a result.

Stewart's challenge, page 38

CAPE TOWN SCOREBOARD

England won toss

ENGLAND: First Innings

*M A Atherton c Hudson b Donald 13

A J Stewart b McMillan 19

(70min, 51 balls)

R A Smith b Adams 66

(243min, 179 balls, 9 fours)

G P Thorpe c McMillan b Donald 20

(47min, 43 balls, 3 fours)

G A Hick c McMillan b Donald 2

(3min, 3 balls)

W C Russell c McMillan b Pollock 5

(78min, 57 balls, 1 four)

M Watkinson bow b Pollock 11

(7min, 9 balls, 2 fours)

D O Cork b Donald 16

(34min, 33 balls, 2 fours)

F J Martin c Hudson b Donald 0

(7min, 6 balls)

A R C Fraser not out 5

(13min, 8 balls, 1 four)

D E Malcolm b Adams 1

(7min, 3 balls)

Extras (b 4, lb 1, w 1, nb 4) 10

Total (88.1 overs, 278min) 753

FALL OF WICKETS: 1-0 (Stewart 0),

2-24 (Smith 9), 3-58 (Smith 22), 4-90

(Smith 22), 5-103 (Smith 40), 6-115

(Smith 50), 7-141 (Smith 60), 8-147

(Smith 66), 9-151 (Fraser 4)

BOWLING: Donald 16.6-48-5 (nb 1,

w 1), 6-4-10-1, 6-1-17-2, 4-0-19-3;

Pollock 14-4-26-2 (nb 1), 5-4-5-0, 4-1-

9-0, 5-1-12-3; Malcolm 10-2-22-1

(nb 2), 5-2-11-1, 4-0-1-0; Adams 20.1-

5-52-2 (11-3-29-0, 9-1-2-23-2); Kallis

11-3-29-0, 9-1-2-23-2; Kallis

4-2-2-0 (one spell); Cronje 4-4-0-0 (one

spell). SCORING NOTES: First day: Lunch:

54-2 (30 overs, 120min) Smith 15,

Thorpe 20, Tice 125-4 (60 overs

242min) Smith 56, Cork 4. England all

out at 4.00pm.

SOUTH AFRICA: First Innings

G Kirsten not out 15

(87min, 60 balls, 2 fours)

A C Hudson bow b Cork 0

(11min, 5 balls)

*W J Cronje c Russell b Cork 12

(25min, 33 balls, 2 fours)

D J Cullinan not out 7

(35min, 22 balls, 1 four)

Extras (b 10) 10

Total (2 wickets, 20 overs, 57min) 44

J N Rhodes, B M McMillan, J H Kallis,

10 J Richardson, S M Pollock, A A

Donald and P R Adams to bat.

FALL OF WICKETS: 1-1 (Kirsten 0),

2-19 (Kirsten 5).

BOWLING: Cork 8-4-11-2; Malcolm

8-5-11-0; Martin 9-2-0; Fraser 2-0-

9-0; Watkinson 1-0-1-0 (one spell

each).

Umpires: S G Randell (Australia) and

D L Orchard. Third umpire: K E

Lebenberg. Match referee: C H Lloyd

(West Indies).

RESULTS: First Test (Pretoria): match

drawn. Second Test (Johannesburg):

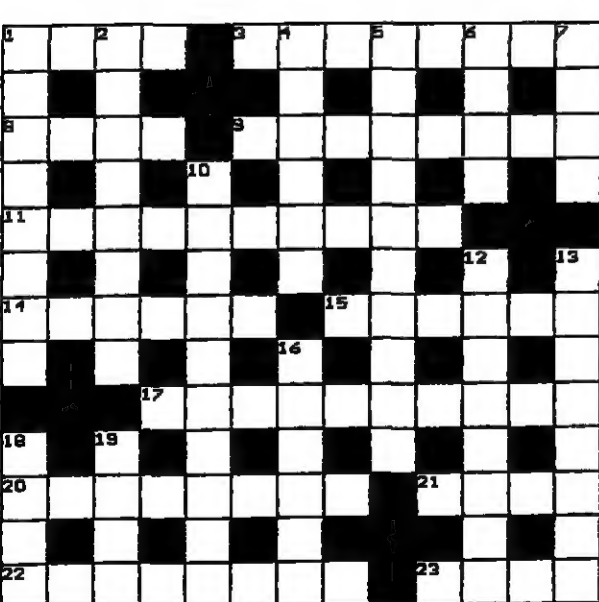
match drawn. Third Test (Durban):

match drawn. Fourth Test (Port Eliza-
beth): match drawn.

Compiled by Bill Fritford

TIMES TWO CROSSWORD

No 668



ACROSS

1 Make beer, tea (4)

3 Puffed out (hair, sleeve) (8)

8 Drug; stupid person (4)

9 Time fixed to start action (4-4)

11 Et cetera (3,2,5)

14 Missive (6)

15 Remove impurities (6)

17 Books other than stories (3-7)

20 Come you back here (Kipling) (8)

21 Serve at table (4)

22 Weak-headed Greek hero (8)

DOWN

2 Unite (with heat, hammer) (4)

1 Docile, obedient (8)

2 Speed up progress (of) (8)

4 Fairy king (MIND) (6)

5 Ministers' row of seats (5,5)

6 Confess, affirm (4)

7 One from Ankara (4)

10 Solid (traffic) (4,2,4)

12 Go to law (8)

13 Brought together again (8)

16 Obliterate (6)

18 Nelson's Lady Hamilton (4)

19 Egyptian looped cross (4)

SOLUTION TO No 667

ACROSS: 1 Both 3 Castled 5 Skiller 9 Admit 10 Clown 11 Oppugns

13 Technique 17 Esparto 19 Argot 20 Dig up 22 Immoial 23 Penance

24 Tyro

DOWN: 1 Bisset 2 Thin on top 3 Cut down to size 4 Stamp 5 Lam

6 Delect 7 Clinic 12 Glangarry 14 Quailms 15 Held up 16 Otello

18 Ripon 21 Gen

SOLUTION TO TIMES TWO CROSSWORD NO 663

In association with BRITISH MIDLAND

ACROSS: 8 Avarice 9 Lianna 10 Orgiastic 11 Ark 12 Silas 14

Teacher 15 Gourmet 17 Dingo 19 Ore 20 Laughable 22 Skein 23 Estella

DOWN: 1 Famous 2 Haig 3 Disassembling 4 Septet

5 Black-and-white 6 Marathon 7 Walker 13 Launcher 15

Grouse 16 Touper 18 One-way 21 Bell

The names of the winners of The Times Two Crossword competition No 663 will be published next Wednesday.

Managers push for winter break

BY OUR SPORTS STAFF

THE League Managers' Association (LMA) is to petition the Football Association and the FA Premier League to introduce a four-week winter break for the country's leading clubs.

It is proposed that the shutdown would come either after the Boxing Day or New Year's Day matches, with clubs resuming at the beginning of February by playing their FA Cup third-round matches. The LMA is pressing for the changes to be implemented from next season and hopes to see some progress on discussions within the next two months.

Gordon Milne, the LMA's chief executive, said: "It has become a growing necessity to look at the number of games being played, not just first-team matches but those involving reserves and youth teams. The pressure on clubs is immense. We are behind the times in England and need to look at re-scheduling fixtures."

"We are preparing a paper that will be distributed to both the FA and the Premier League. We are just involving the 20 Premier League clubs at the moment as a basis for

discussion. Our argument has nothing to do with the weather — it is about the amount of injuries players pick up over the Christmas and New Year period.

"We could have a winter break and shorten the summer break. I think that would appeal to most people in the game. I know some critics might say that players in the old days used to be involved in as many games, but it is not like the old days, the demands are much higher today. Crowds have been huge over the holiday period, but many teams have been forced to field scratch sides. That is

not fair on the paying public."

Howard Wilkinson, the Leeds United manager and chairman of the LMA, expressed his concern at the number of matches being played after his team's 0-0 draw with Blackburn Rovers on Monday. He said: "The public wants some games at Christmas and I'd give them one on Boxing Day and New Year's Day, but we need some sort of break."

"If my players had not played for a week before the Blackburn game, I would have had to hold up my hand and say it was eminently

forgettable, but I think I have to defend them."

Ray Harford, the Blackburn manager, said: "It's not fair to the players to ask them to play four games in nine days as ours have. The hardest job is to get people to be fit enough to play — and that showed in both teams."

Middlesbrough is a prime example of a club struggling to come to terms with the punishing holiday schedule, having played three games in a week, losing all of them. Bryan Robson, the manager, is one of nine players having treatment at the club, which faces a tricky FA Cup visit to the second division promotion-chasers, Notts County, on Saturday.

Milne added: "The Cup means so much to everybody involved, yet many clubs will not be prepared properly as they won't risk some of their players in training. At least let's try it. If it is not successful, we can revert back to the old system."

A Premier League spokesman said: "We will consider any proposals which will serve the best interests of football."

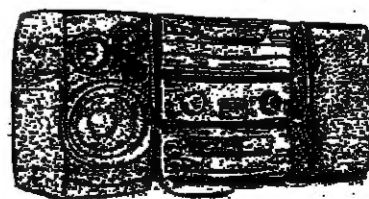


Wilkinson: backs move



Harford: injury worry

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